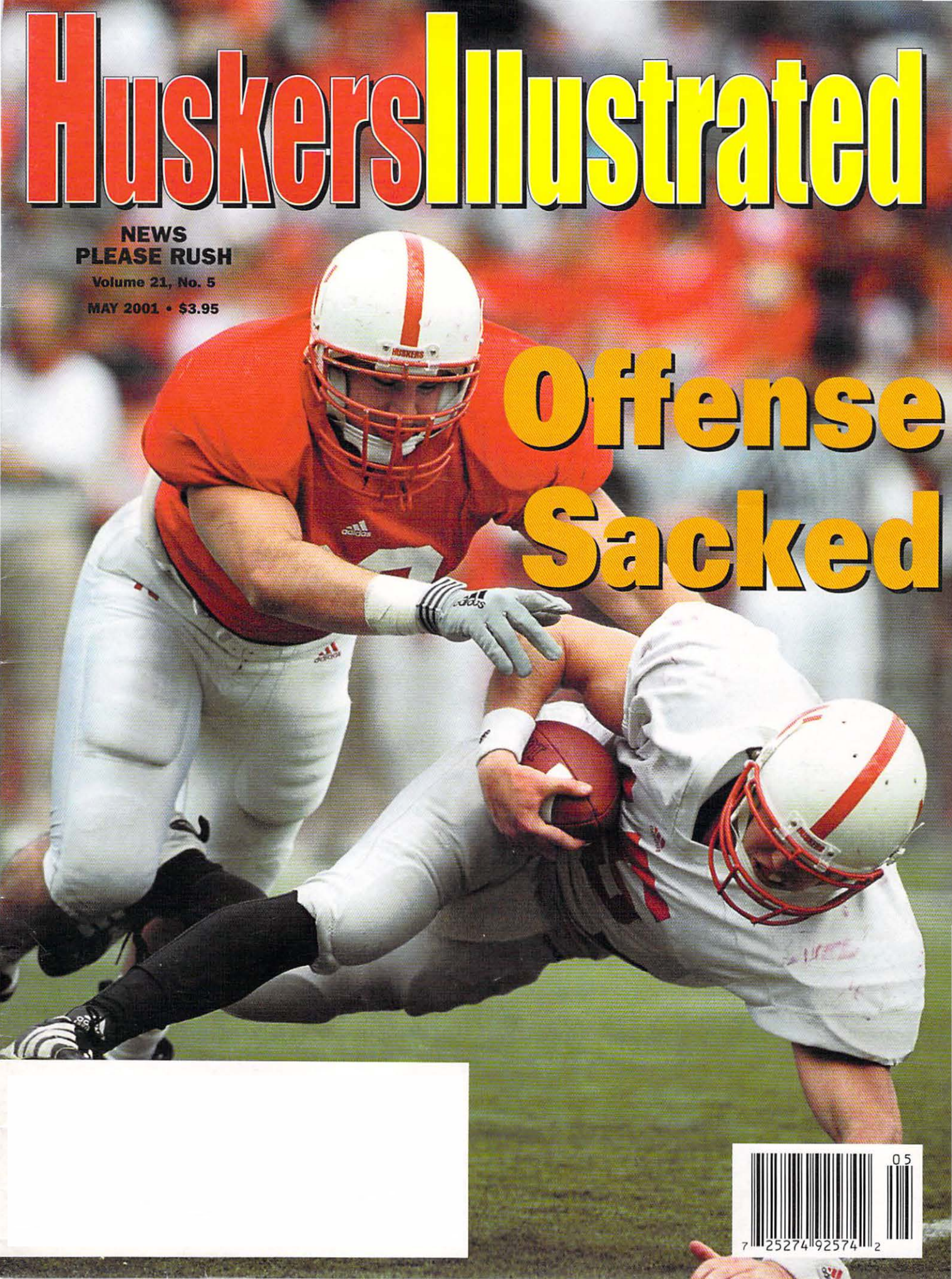


Huskers Illustrated

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Volume 21, No. 5

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March 26	Colorado State	2 & 4 p.m.
March 30	Oklahoma	5 & 7 p.m.
March 31	Texas Tech	2 p.m.
April 1	Texas Tech	Noon
April 2	Bradley	1:30 p.m.
April 4	Creighton	7 p.m.
April 10	Brigham Young	TBA
April 14	Oklahoma State	2 p.m.
April 15	Oklahoma State	2 p.m.
April 21	Texas A&M	2 p.m.
April 22	Texas A&M	1 p.m.
April 24	Creighton	7 p.m.
May 6	Iowa State	3 p.m.

Times may change due to weather.

Baseball Home Schedule Stadium Drive

March 9	Kansas State	2 p.m.
March 10	Kansas State	2 p.m.
March 11	Kansas State	1 p.m.
March 23	Missouri	6:30 p.m.
March 24	Missouri	2 p.m.
March 25	Missouri	1 p.m.
March 28	Wisconsin-Milwaukee	1 p.m.
April 4	Creighton	6:30 p.m.
April 6	Texas	6:30 p.m.
April 7	Texas	2 p.m.
April 8	Texas	Noon
April 10	Southern Utah	6:30 p.m.
April 11	Southern Utah	1 p.m.
April 13	Baylor	6:30 p.m.
April 14	Baylor	2 p.m.
April 15	Baylor	1 p.m.
April 17	Texas-San Antonio	6:30 p.m.
April 18	Texas-San Antonio	1 p.m.
April 24	Creighton	6:30 p.m.
May 4	Oklahoma State	6:30 p.m.
May 5	Oklahoma State	2 p.m.
May 6	Oklahoma State	1 p.m.
May 8	Northern Iowa	6:30 p.m.

Times may change due to weather.



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Defense Dominates

Big plays hard to find in Spring Game; baseball team just keeps rolling along



Brian Hill

AS SPRING GAMES GO, it just wasn't very exciting.

According to a list in the back of the "Official Spring Media Guide and Program," the 23 points (Red 16, White 7) scored were the fewest since 1969, when the White team won 10-8.

You could have expected at least one big scoring play — one long run, pass play or return.

The longest running play was an 18-yarder by quarterback Jammal Lord, who was limited (as were those tackling him) by a green jersey. The longest play of the game was a 35-yard pass play from Brett Lindstrom to wingback Jack O'Holleran.

The 2001 Spring Game was a defensive struggle . . . not that there's anything wrong with that.

The game featured 16 sacks and served as a coming out party of sorts for young defensive linemen Patrick Kabongo (12 tackles), Manaia Brown (seven tackles, including three sacks) and Benard Thomas (five tackles and four sacks).

Of course, the offense was without starting quarterback Eric Crouch, No. 1 fullback Judd Davies and three offensive linemen who are potential starters.

The positives on the offensive side were the play of Lord, who completed 7-of-11 passes and rushed for 46 yards, and the lack of turnovers. With four quarterbacks handling the football and 14 players running at least once from scrimmage, there was just one fumble.

You'll find complete coverage of spring football and the Spring Game beginning

on Page 12. Contributing editor Mike Babcock provides a closer look at several young players.

While 30,414 watched the completion of the spring football season, a record crowd was gathering just to the north of Memorial Stadium. Buck Beltzer Stadium was stuffed with 4,029 baseball fans to watch the second of a three-game series with No. 8 Baylor. The Huskers posted an emotional 6-4 victory and went on to sweep the Bears and take over first place in the Big 12.

After five straight victories and 13 out of 14, NU was rewarded with a No. 3 rating in the Baseball America poll. Our baseball coverage in this issue includes a feature on the Huskers' top power source — first baseman Dan Johnson.

There was some sad news out of the athletic department, with the March 25 announcement that men's swimming and diving would be discontinued as an intercollegiate sport beginning with the 2001-2002 season (see story on Page 6).

Dropping sports programs is becoming a sign of the times, but it wasn't someone else this time.

Kansas already had announced that it was dropping swimming. Before the smoke had cleared from Nebraska's announcement, Iowa State followed suit with its swimming program and also decided to drop baseball.

The Huskers close the regular season with a three-game series against the Cyclones May 11-13 in Ames. One program making its last stand and another on its way to the postseason and a possible berth in the College World Series.

It should be interesting. ■



ON THE COVER

Red team rush end Justin Smith sacks White team quarterback Brett Lindstrom in the Spring Game. It was one of 16 quarterback sacks by the defenses. *Photos by Scott Bruhn*

Got Something To Say?

Please send your comments and questions to: Letters, 3210 NW 3rd St., Lincoln, Neb. 68521. You can also fax them to us at (402) 474-5132. We reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, content and length. For those with electronic mail abilities, Hleditor@aol.com.

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Huskers Illustrated

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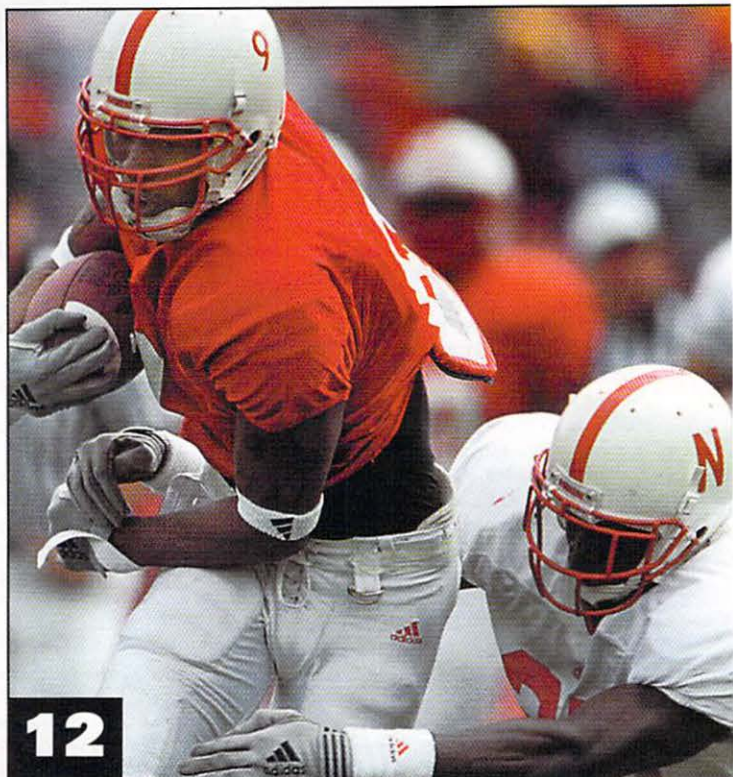
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Former hockey player Dan Johnson swings a big stick for Huskers. *By Mike Babcock*

NEXT ISSUE

The June/July Football Yearbook will be mailed about June 11.

Linebackers on the Move

Linebacker was one of the most uncertain areas in terms of depth during spring practice for the Nebraska football team. Senior Jamie Burrow was held out of the Red-White game with a back problem and junior Tony Tata was sidelined by a torn anterior cruciate ligament, leaving sophomores T.J. Hollowell and Steve Safranek as the top middle linebackers still healthy at spring's end.

Safranek is a walk-on from Gross High School in Omaha.

Hollowell, who was switched from the strongside to the weakside at the start of spring, moved to the middle following Tata's injury in the final Saturday scrimmage before the Red-White game.

Tata underwent surgery to repair the damage and is expected back in the fall.

Ideally, Hollowell would have remained at weakside linebacker, according to defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Craig Bohl. "But we're just too thin at the Mike position."

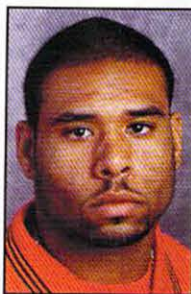
Hollowell, who played middle linebacker in high school in Copperas Cove, Texas, was still trying to adjust to the weakside after seeing limited action on the strongside as a true freshman.

That move was made, in part, because senior Randy Stella, the starting weakside linebacker and the team's second-leading tackler in the 2000 season, was suspended by Solich for the entire spring, leaving senior Mark Vedral as the only experienced player at the position.

Solich would not elaborate on the reason for Stella's suspension, saying only that it was a "non-academic situation . . . more dealing with team policy." Solich indicated that a decision on whether or not Stella would be allowed to rejoin the team wouldn't be made until the fall.

Solich reiterated his position on Stella following the Red-White game.

The linebacking corps already had been depleted by the losses of redshirted



T.J. Hollowell



Craig Bohl

freshman Lannie Hopkins, who was moved to rover in the spring, and Shaun Coleman, a highly regarded recruit in 1999, who was placed on medical scholarship because of a chronic wrist problem.

"Physically, he had all the attributes you were looking for," Bohl said of Coleman.

Junior Scott Shanle, a returning starter and the team's fifth-leading tackler, provides experience at strongside linebacker. Vedral saw considerable action, alternating with Stella. And Burrow, a three-year letterman, is the clear-cut successor to Carlos Polk in the middle.

But "we like to play with two players at each position," said Bohl.

To that end, redshirted freshman Jason Richenberger was moved from the weakside to the strongside prior to the start of spring practice as Bohl tried to find the best fit for his young players.

Ira Cooper, another redshirted freshman, played on the strongside during the spring, while Blanchard Johnson, a sophomore and letterman primarily on special teams, played on the weakside.

"We're in the process of trying to sort out where we can find the best spots for our players," Bohl said early in the spring. And that process continued

throughout the NCAA-allotted 15 practices.

Hollowell could be forgiven some confusion based on his position switches. He didn't find out he would be playing the weakside to start the spring until a little more than a week before.

He had just finished eating breakfast at the training table when Bohl approached him. "He just said, 'Hey, T.J., you're going to be playing Will this spring,'" said Hollowell. "I was like, 'All right.' I was ready for whatever he gave me, really. I wasn't trying to talk my way out of it. "He just threw it at me and I just took it and went about my business, really."

Hollowell struggled with the adjustment for about a week, during which his play was "kind of shaky," he said. During practice on the Monday after the first Saturday scrimmage, however, "everything was clicking. I was understanding everything a lot better. It just felt real good today."

That's how it is for young players, Bohl said. "It's funny. Guys have come along at different stages. You never know when the light turns on. But all of a sudden, one day you wake up and 'Wow.'"

Though Hollowell had little time for the light to turn on at middle linebacker, he earned praise from Solich following the Red-White game. "I saw T.J. Hollowell make plays, which was what we were really wanting to see any time you play a linebacker spot," said Solich. "He's played two backer spots for us this spring. He's picked up both of them very well and showed the ability to play either."

Hollowell and Shanle led the White team in tackles with six apiece.

Hollowell has taken the position changes in stride. "To me it's good to know as much as you can at every position, really," he said. And that was before he moved to the middle. ■

HUSKER MEN'S SWIMMING PROGRAM VICTIM OF ECONOMIC CRUNCH

In more than 100 years of intercollegiate athletics, Nebraska had never eliminated a varsity men's sport. That changed in late March, when Athletic Director Bill Byrne announced that the Cornhusker men's swimming and diving team would be discontinued.

The decision to cut the 80-year-old program was based primarily on economics, according to Byrne. Nebraska spent \$500,000 on men's swimming and diving this year.

Women's swimming and diving, for which some \$800,000 has been budgeted next year, will be retained. Gender-equity issues under Title IX would make eliminating any women's program difficult, if not impossible, according to new university chancellor Harvey Pearlman.

Nebraska's athletic department budget is approximately \$39.5 million. The university sponsored 24 varsity sports for men and women this year, the most of any school in the Big

12 Conference.

Men's team swimmers and divers, of whom there were 26 this season, will be allowed to keep their scholarship aid, or the university will help in their attempts to transfer.

Nebraska isn't the only conference athletic department affected by economics and gender-equity concerns. Kansas announced in late March that it was dropping men's swimming and tennis. And Iowa State announced in early April that it was dropping men's swimming and baseball.

Iowa State has fielded a baseball team since 1892. "It's tough news to hear," Cornhusker baseball Coach Dave Van Horn told the Omaha World-Herald of Iowa State's decision.

An NCAA investigation into Nebraska's swimming and diving program, for women as well as for men, was a contributing factor in Byrne's decision to cut the men's team. The economics of major college athletics will continue to jeopardize Olympic or non-revenue sports.

"There are no guarantees," Byrne told the World-Herald. "I don't think any athletic director can say every sport is going to continue forever." ■



Bill Byrne

TWO GONE, ONE ON

Guard Kevin Augustine and forward Danaei Young left the Nebraska basketball team in early April, Augustine for undisclosed personal reasons and Young after being dismissed for violating unspecified team rules.

Coach Barry Collier said in a release through the sports information office, "We have standards set with the program, and it is regrettable when someone is unable to stay within those boundaries."

Young, who would have been a junior, was redshirted last season after transferring from Cowley County, Kan., Community College. Augustine, a senior-to-be, played in 24 games, starting 10, and averaged 4.1 points, 2.7 assists and 1.2 rebounds per game.

He averaged 17.8 minutes in his first season at Nebraska.

Even with Augustine's departure, the Cornhuskers will have three point guards next season. In addition to seniors-to-be John Robinson and Cary Cochran, Brennon Clemmons, a 6-foot-2 junior transfer from Central College in Olney, Ill., is scheduled to enroll in the fall.

Collier also released a statement through the sports information office regarding Augustine's departure, saying, in part, "We, as a program, wish him well in his future endeavors."

Young's dismissal was a financial blessing to senior Ross Buckendahl, who was awarded a scholarship. Buckendahl, a walk-on from Battle Creek, Neb., was eligible to receive scholarship aid despite a new NCAA rule limiting men's basketball programs to five new scholarships in a given year.

The Cornhuskers already have five scholarship recruits for 2001-02. Buckendahl, on scholarship in 1999-2000, sat out this season as a medical redshirt following knee surgery.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

Former Indiana basketball coach Bob Knight joined the Big 12 in late March, signing on to replace James Dickey, who was fired after the season by Texas Tech. While he was head coach at Butler, Cornhusker Coach Barry Collier matched wits with the "General" five times, winning once.

Collier welcomes Knight's presence in the conference.

"I think it's a very, very good thing for our league and specifically for Texas Tech," he told the Lincoln Journal Star. "Coach Knight is exactly what you say, a Hall of Fame coach that does a great job with teams."

Texas Tech is scheduled to play at Nebraska next season. ■



Ross Buckendahl

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

K FOR KOMINE

Junior right-hander Shane Komine broke Mike Zajeski's Cornhusker career record for strikeouts in the second inning of a 14-4 victory against Missouri at Buck Beltzer Stadium. Komine struck out five in the seven-hit, complete-game victory to surpass Zajeski's 289 strikeouts.

The record-breaker came on a called third strike. "It was an average day for Shane, but he just knows how to win," Coach Dave Van Horn told the Omaha World-Herald.

Komine was hardly average in his next start, pitching a second consecutive complete-game, 7-1 victory against Oklahoma at Norman. He allowed only four hits and struck out 11.

The Cornhuskers swept the series, their first three-game sweep at Oklahoma since 1962.

In mid-March, Komine made Van Horn's return to Northwestern State, where he coached before coming to Nebraska, a triumphant one, striking out 12 and allowing just one earned run in eight innings of a 13-1 victory at Natchitoches, La. The 12 strikeouts, a season-high to that point, increased his career total to 288, setting the stage for the record-breaker a week later.



Shane Komine

ANOTHER TITLE

The Nebraska women's gymnastics team set school and conference records for points in winning the Big 12 championship at the Bob Devaney Sports Center in late March. The Huskers held off Iowa State by scoring a school-record 49.625 points in the balance beam, their final event.

Oklahoma finished third in the overall competition. Missouri was fourth.

Husker freshman Alecia Ingram was selected as Big 12 gymnast of the year and newcomer of the year in a vote of conference coaches. It was the first time both awards went to a freshman.

Nebraska sophomore Bree Dority O'Callaghan scored a perfect 10 on the uneven bars as the Huskers won their fourth conference title since 1997 and their 16th overall, since 1975.

FUTURE CORNHUSKER, STILL

Alvin Marshall, a member of Nebraska's 2000 football recruiting class, still expects to play for the Cornhuskers, after earning an associate's degree at East Los Angeles College. The 5-foot-11, 180-pound wide receiver out of Locke High in Los Angeles did not meet NCAA freshman eligibility requirements and didn't attend school in the fall. He now is enrolled at the junior college in Monterey Park, Calif.

Cornhusker I-back Thunder Collins also attended East Los Angeles College.

PIATKOWSKI STILL HITTING THE THREES

Former Husker basketball player Eric Piatkowski was the third leading scorer for the Los Angeles Clippers this season, averaging 10.6 points over 81 games. Piatkowski, the Clippers' all-time leader in career three-pointers, hit 120 of 297 (40.4 percent) from beyond the arc during the 2000-2001 season. He scored a season-high of 30 points against Seattle Jan. 24.

Three other ex-Huskers played in the NBA this season:

— Erick Strickland averaged 6.4 points, 3.5 rebounds and 3.0 assists per in 22 games for the Vancouver Grizzlies, who acquired him from the New York Knicks on Jan. 30. Strickland played in 28 games for the Knicks, averaging 4.3 points. He scored 15 points against Chicago on Feb. 24.

— Tyrone Lue averaged 3.4 points in 38 games for the Los Angeles Lakers. His best game was a 10-point effort against Philadelphia Feb. 14.

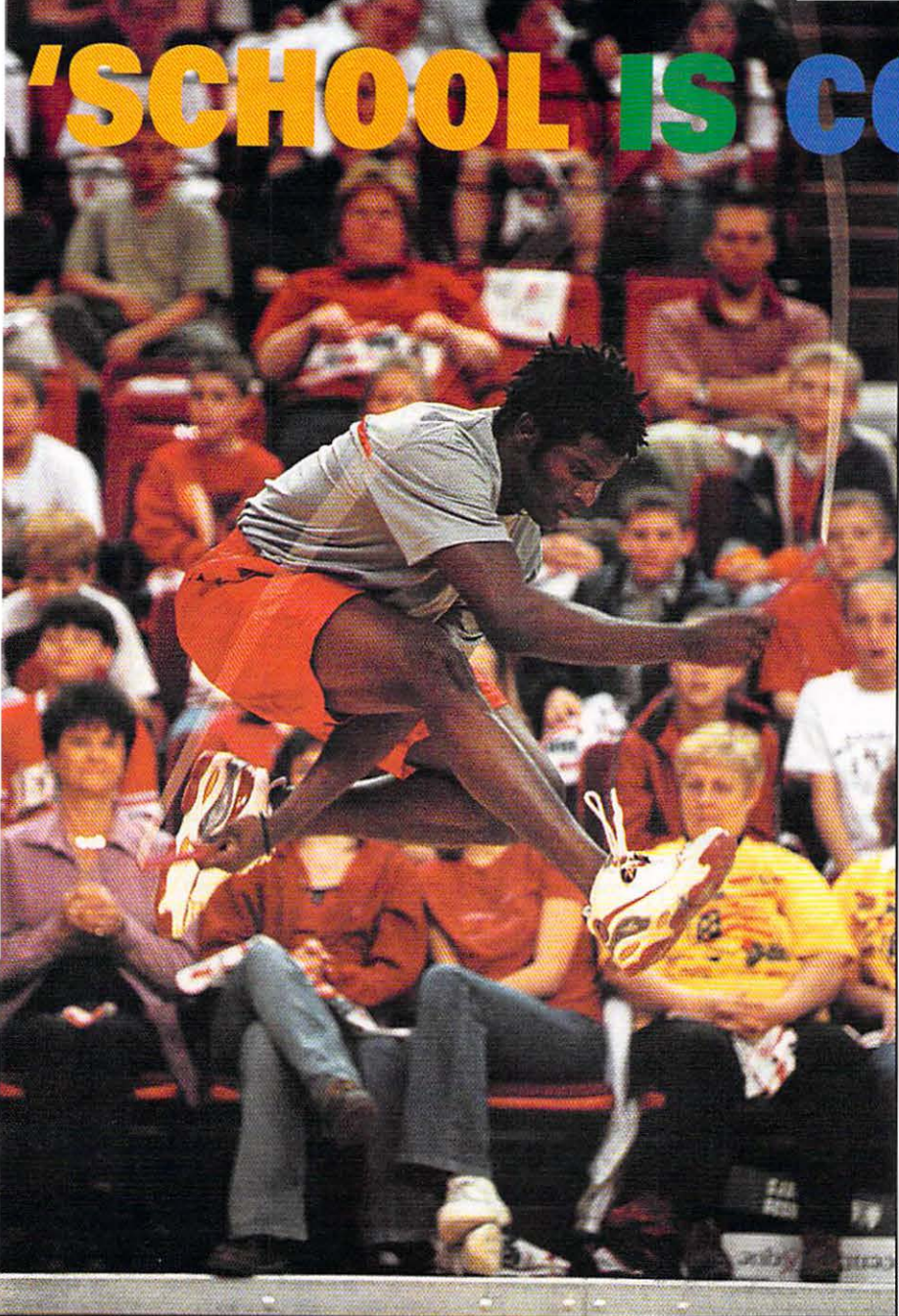
— Mikki Moore averaged 4.4 points and 3.9 rebounds in 80 games for the Detroit Pistons. He scored 16 points on two occasions and twice had 12 rebounds.

BRIEFLY NOTED

— Former Cornhusker basketball coach Danny Nee has been hired as the head coach at Duquesne, after one season at Robert Morris in which his team finished 7-22. Both Duquesne and Robert Morris are located in Pittsburgh. Nee's wife Janet is from the Pittsburgh area.

— Former Cornhusker baseball and football player Darin Erstad has been moved from left field to center field by the Anaheim Angels this season. Erstad, who regards center field as his natural position, is coming off a season in which he batted .355 with 25 home runs and 100 runs-batted-in. He also scored 121 runs and stole 28 bases as the Angels' lead-off hitter. He made a run at George Sisler's 80-year-old major league single-season record for base hits, finishing with 240, just 17 short of Sisler. ■

'SCHOOL IS COOL' JAM

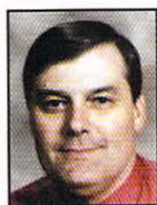


About 13,000 Nebraska school kids attended the 10th annual "School is Cool" Jam April 9 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The event, billed as the nation's largest pep rally for education, included a jump-roping demonstration by Husker football player Willie Amos (left) and his national championship jump-roping team. Speakers included former Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne (bottom left), now a Nebraska congressman, and volleyball All-American Nancy Meendering-Metcalf (bottom right). Because of budgetary concerns within many schools and rising transportation costs, this year's jam was the final one in Lincoln. The University will continue to coordinate the annual North Platte "School is Cool" Jam and the "Tour of Excellence," ensuring that Husker student-athlete role-models make an impact with youth throughout the state.



Family Affair

Ex-Husker Burrow joins sons in Nebraska football program



Mike BABCOCK

JAMIE BURROW WAS HAPPY that dad Jimmy was joining the Nebraska coaching staff as a graduate assistant. "My dad was really looking to get back into college coaching, and this provided the perfect opportunity for him to do that," said Jamie, the Cornhuskers' middle linebacker.

Perfect in that Jimmy Burrow played at Nebraska from 1972 to 1975.

Still, Jamie had reservations about his dad coming from Ames, Iowa, to join Coach Frank Solich's staff, filling the graduate assistant's position left open by Brian Washington's departure.

(Washington left to enter private business.)

Jamie's brother Dan, a walk-on defensive back, also had mixed emotions about his dad's decision to come to Nebraska. "They weren't just totally gung-ho about it," Jimmy said.

"Jamie's comment was, he had left Ames to get away from home, so to speak, and that I might not see him quite as much as I thought I was. Dan was probably more positive than Jamie, being a little more of a homebody over the years, so I think he was a little more fired up about it.

"But now that they've figured out that I've got a washer-dryer . . ."

The boys can take their laundry home. And "hopefully get some free meals," said Jamie.

The opportunity to join his sons was a significant factor in Jimmy Burrow's decision to return to Nebraska, that and the quality of the program itself. "When you want to do something like that, you want to do it for one of the best, if not the best staff in the country," he said.

"The more I think about it, if it (the grad assistant's position) would have been somewhere else, it probably would have been a decision I would not have made."

Burrow's wife is from Cook, Neb., and she has two brothers who live in Lincoln. So that helped, too. "At least she gets to be around her family, or near them," said Burrow. "She was for it."

Nevertheless, "it was a tough decision because I was making a good living in Ames, a comfortable living. Financially, that certainly was a cause for concern as far as doing this."

Financial concerns of a different type brought Burrow to Nebraska nearly 30 years ago. He was from Amory, Miss., and had started for the Mississippi freshman football team as a walk-on.

When Mississippi wouldn't give him a scholarship, even though NCAA scholarship limits were considerably more generous at the time, he looked to transfer to a school that would.

Jim Walden, who had coached Burrow as a high school sophomore in Amory, was an assistant at Nebraska and figured Burrow would be a good fit for the Cornhuskers.

Although he had played defensive back at Mississippi, Burrow also had been an option quarterback in high school. And Nebraska needed an option quarterback — for its scout team.

Since several Big Eight teams, including rival Oklahoma, were running option offenses, Walden was able to convince Coach Bob Devaney that giving Burrow a scholarship would be a good investment, even if he never did anything except play quarterback on the scout team.

Burrow, who had rarely been out of the state of Mississippi, quickly earned his scholarship. Lining up in practice against players such as Rich Glover, Willie Harper and John Dutton in the fall of 1972, "I was pretty frightened, to tell you the truth," he said. "We didn't go live very much, but we went live enough to know I was glad I wasn't the quarterback against them on Saturdays."

By his junior year, Burrow was starting in the secondary for new Coach Tom Osborne, at cornerback and then at safety, as well as returning punts and kickoffs. He led the Cornhuskers with four interceptions in 1974 and earned second-team all-conference recognition in 1975.

After six professional seasons, including five in the Canadian league, Burrow got into coaching. He coached defensive backs for Walden at Washington State from 1981 to 1986, then went with Walden to Iowa State, where he coached through the 1994 season.

He became an assistant coach at Ames High in 1995, moving up head coach three years later. Also during that time, he served as an assistant with the Arena League's Iowa Barnstormers.

"I was able to kind of get my (coaching) fix, so to speak, with the Barnstormers and high school," Burrow said. "That kept me going for a good portion of the year."

When they were sold, "that took a pretty big part of coaching out of my life."

He has never lost his fondness for Nebraska. Even after Iowa State upset the Cornhuskers 19-10 at Ames in 1992, "I felt a little sad because Coach Osborne was still trying to win his first national championship, and I knew that eliminated his chance," said Burrow.

Osborne's response after the loss underscored his character and the quality of the program. A couple of days later, "I had a letter in my mailbox (from Osborne), saying congratulations and it wasn't a fluke; you guys just out-played us," Burrow said. "I mean, how many people would do that?"

"He had just lost a shot at a national championship and yet he thought enough about what we had done to write me a letter. Again, he is an amazing guy."

Such behavior inspires a unique loyalty, which has brought Burrow back. "One of the good things about coming to a place like Nebraska is, they made you feel at home, the coaches and the players," he said. "Everybody was great from the start, way back then, and they still are." ■



Jimmy Burrow led Nebraska in interceptions in 1974.

Reliving 'The Catch'

*Ex-Huskies Frost, Davison
hooking up once again*



**Terry
DOUGLASS**

FOREVER LINKED in Nebraska football history by a single play, Scott Frost and Matt Davison have come together once again.

The pair of ex-Cornhuskers are marketing a poster celebrating "The Catch" — Davison's 1997 miracle touchdown reception that helped Nebraska narrowly avoid defeat and eventually score a 45-38 overtime victory at Missouri. NU went on to post a 13-0 record and win a share of the national

championship that season in Tom Osborne's final year as head coach.

Davison's catch was the highlight, not only for the Huskers, but also for all of college football that year. It won ESPN's '97 ESPY award for best college football play and is considered by some as one of the most remarkable plays of all time.

Now, nearly 3 1/2 years later, Davison and Frost have hooked up again on a glory tour of sorts, greeting fans and signing Husker memorabilia, including their poster. The two have made a little more than half of the 20 or so stops they've tentatively scheduled across the state. During an April visit to Grand Island, both Frost and Davison said they've enjoyed sharing their trip down memory lane with Husker fans.

"It's good to be in this area again," said Frost, a Wood River native who is a defensive back and special teams performer for the NFL's New York Jets. "It's always good to get back to the middle of the state. This is home base for me."

Davison, who completed his college eligibility in Nebraska's December Alamo Bowl victory over Northwestern, said he's also having fun with the venture.

"I love meeting the people, seeing the people and just getting a chance to talk with them and give back a little bit," Davison said. "They've always been great to me."

It's obvious to anyone that Davison and Frost are having a good time together, sometimes at each other's expense. Responding to a TV reporter's question about the tour, Frost was quick to tease Davison, who was easily within earshot of the interview.

"We've put together a poster of Matt's amazing play in Missouri that saved us the national title that year," Frost said, trying unsuccessfully not to grin as Davison rolled his eyes and shook his head. "We're bringing those out so people can see them, and it gives us a chance to get out and meet the fans, too. Luckily, Matt is letting me sit on this."

Of course, Frost was mostly kidding. Mostly. The former Husker quarterback admitted that he hopes people don't forget there was more to Nebraska's Missouri Miracle than just "The Catch."

"I think a lot of people forget that we had to put a good drive together at the beginning of that thing," Frost said. "All year, we didn't throw very much because we ran the ball so well. It was just a matter of, when we had to do it, I think we

did it pretty well.

"The whole team didn't get nervous and just stayed calm in that situation and we ended up performing and getting the job done. It was really exciting."

Looking back, it was a rather impressive drive. Trailing 38-31 with 1:02 to play and no timeouts remaining, Frost led his team onto the field with 67 yards between the Huskers and the Missouri goal line.

Frost completed passes to split end Kenny Cheatham, Davison and two more to Cheatham to eventually give Nebraska a third-and-goal play at the Missouri 12-yard line with just seven seconds remaining. With a play called "99 double slant" in the works, Frost took the snap and looked to his left. No one was open, so he glanced back to his right, hesitated and then drilled a bullet pass into the middle toward a slanting Shevin Wiggins.

With a Missouri defender right behind him, Wiggins jumped into the air to catch the ball. However, the pass glanced off Wiggins' hands and chest and appeared to carom off his facemask and body before bounding off Wiggins' foot — as he was falling backwards — sending the pigskin into the air. Davison, who was cutting to the middle from the left side, made a headlong dive and managed to scoop the football up just before it hit the ground.

"I could feel the grass between my fingers," Davison later said when recalling the play. "It was real close."

It's ironic that Davison has welcomed the idea of "The Catch" tour. After being somewhat overwhelmed with media attention following the play, Davison admitted that he began to tire of being asked about it.

"It was motivation for me after my freshman year to do some things throughout the rest of my career," said Davison, who finished second on Nebraska's all-time charts in career receptions (93) and yards (1,456). "Not that I wanted people to forget about the play at Missouri, but hopefully I made people see that I was a well-rounded player and not just a one-catch wonder."

Now that Davison has joined Frost in the ex-Husker category, he said he'll miss playing for Nebraska. He said it will be difficult to replace the daily competition as well as the friendships he built with teammates.

"Guys like Scott that I've made friends with, we're going to be friends forever," Davison said. "Those are the things that you're going to take with you for the rest of your life."

Frost, entering his fourth season of professional football, agreed.

"I'm always surprised when people leave college for the NFL early because honestly, the experiences you have playing college football are some of the best of your life," Frost said. "They're times you'll never forget."

Especially when you're on the throwing end of "The Catch." ■



**Scott Frost and Matt
Davison are featured
on "The Catch."**

First Things First

Nebraska baseball team's goal is regular-season title



Curt McKEEVER

DAVE VAN HORN loves the attention a 51-17 season brought his Nebraska baseball program.

He especially likes the big crowds at Buck Beltzer Stadium, where the Cornhuskers have become so popular that players, coaches and even batboys sign autographs to the point of finger cramps.

Can you imagine what kind of lovefest awaits Big Red when their bus pulls up to Rosenblatt Stadium for the College World Series next month?

Trust me, Van Horn hears that kind of conjecture nearly every day. And while the thought of a June trip down I-80 brings a grin to his face, he treats the talk as if he were in the third-base coaching box and a slow runner was thinking about trying to score from second on a single to shallow left field.

The stop sign is definitely on.

"You have to be cautious," Van Horn said of the outpouring of CWS hype brought on after the 2000 Huskers came one game away from their first trip. "We're trying to get there, and we're doing everything we can. But we're not talking about it now. We're talking about winning conference games."

"This time of year, you start thinking about it, but it's not 'If we don't make it we're going to be miserable.' We really want a chance to be in the conference race. To me, coming up here, nobody ever thought we'd have a chance to win this league. And I think it would be easier maybe to get hot at the end of the year and make it through two regionals, than go through the Big 12 and win an outright championship."

"That's the team's goal — to win that league. And then go from there."

Halfway through the conference season, the Huskers were very much in contention to reach their goal. After taking two of three games in a scintillating series against Texas (two contests were decided by a single run and the other went to extra innings), Nebraska was in second place and getting ready to play host to first-place Baylor.

If that wasn't enough to boost the College World Series talk, the Huskers' 27-8 record added more fuel. A year ago at the 35-game mark, Nebraska was 24-11.

That comparison, of course, would be unfair, as last year's team was in the midst of a 15-game winning streak and would go on to post a 18-3 record in April.

While that might be key for building momentum, Van Horn knows a more important gauge for how a team will fare in the postseason is by how it plays in May.

That's why he's leery about making predictions for the Huskers beyond this month.

Even though he sees some of the same signs he saw in 1985, when he was an assistant for an Arkansas team that finished third in the College World Series.

"I thought we could get there, because I felt like we had the talent," Van Horn recalled. "We went down to the regional in Tallahassee, and that's back when they were six-team regionals, and we had to beat Florida State and Georgia Tech."

Nobody was talking about Arkansas winning it, and we won in four straight."

Arkansas got back to the coveted field of eight in 1987. But that season, Van Horn wasn't as confident in the Razorbacks' chances.

A year ago, Van Horn figured Nebraska was playing well enough in May that it could win its second straight conference tournament. He also liked the Huskers' chances in a regional. And in a best-of-three Super Regional, anything's possible.

So what do the cards for this year look like?

For starters, NU's starting pitching isn't nearly as settled as last season. In April, the Huskers were still looking for a No. 3 to go along with Shane Komine and Jamie Rodrigue, both of whom were off from 2000 performances that made them All-Americans.

The bullpen, however, is deep in talent.

Offensively, the Huskers were leading the Big 12 in hitting, but Van Horn was still hoping a couple of players in the lineup would get going.

And defensively, he was bothered by too many botched routine plays that had his team just seventh in the league in fielding percentage.

Even if everything gels at the right time, it'll take some luck for Nebraska to end up at the ultimate destination.

Playing at Haymarket Park, or Beltzer if the Huskers' new home isn't completed in time for the postseason, would help the cause.

So would having a leader like Justin Cowan emerge.

Last year, when the All-America catcher didn't like what was going on, he took matters into his own hands.

"If Cowan would get on the team in the dugout, or actually get with one or two guys for not hustling and not getting into it, they responded," Van Horn said. "They respected him, and they got after it. A lot of times, a coach is always getting on you, and you think that's their job. But when a player who plays has something to say, a lot of times they take that to heart."

Because last year's team responded with the fury of a tidal wave, a lot of people may be taking it for granted Nebraska will be in the same position the first weekend of next month.

Van Horn isn't about to tip his hat on what he thinks about that. But count on this: Nebraska no longer is the new kid on the block.

"I don't think it'll be easier to do it, but experience-wise, our players know what it's all about. Somehow, that makes a difference," Van Horn said of the postseason. "Whether we win or don't, or even if we get to a Super Regional, at least we have the experience if we do get there."

You hear that?

If.

"We're going to go play and do all we can," Van Horn promised. ■



Dave Van Horn's Huskers have won two straight Big 12 tournaments.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Red 16, White 7

Mostly Defense

***With Crouch,
other projected
starters missing,
offense struggles
in Spring Game***

Eric Crouch did what he could during the Red-White game. He charted plays.

"I was just kind of being a leader out there as far as motivation, trying to put a spark in the guys," Nebraska's senior quarterback said following the Red team's 16-7 victory.

"It would be nice to be able to get into the game a little more because charting plays, you're chasing the coach around and trying to figure out what's going on, formation-wise and the play calling," he said. "But

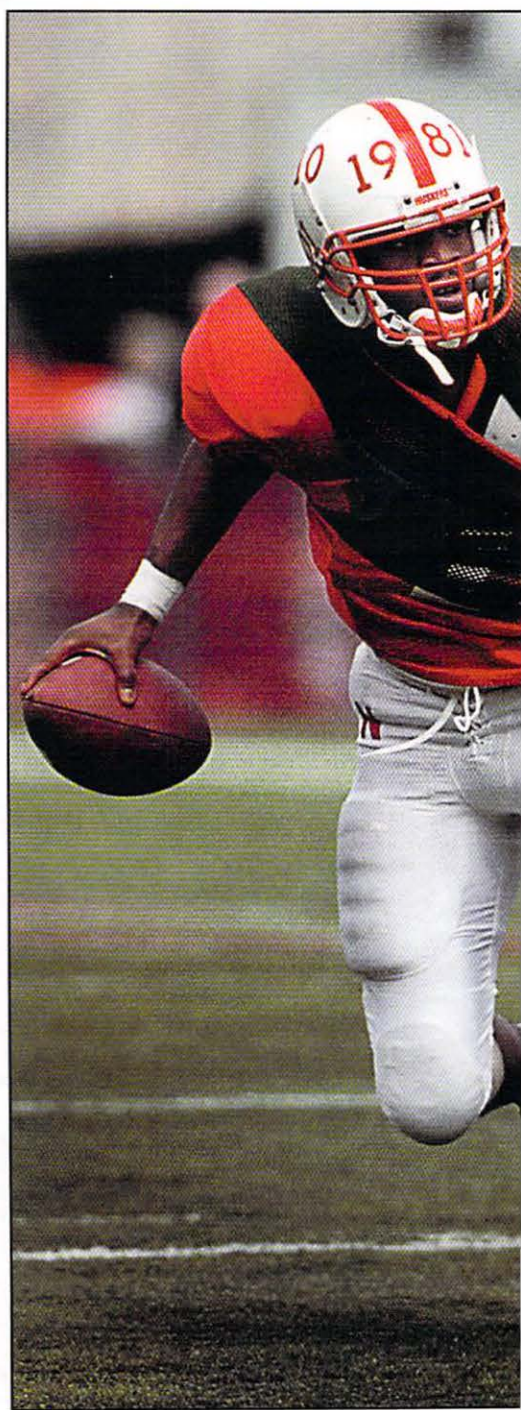
it's not bad if I can help out in any way. If that's what it takes, that's what it takes."

That's what it took for Crouch to be involved. He couldn't participate otherwise because of the rehabilitation of his right shoulder, which was surgically repaired in early January.

Crouch was held out of spring practice and prohibited from throwing, a restriction that was to be lifted the first of May. "Right now, I feel like I'm on track," he said. "So I'll be ready."

A year ago, he also was coming off shoulder surgery, but he wasn't as careful in his rehab. He started throwing in late March and participated in spring practice in a limited way.

"A good way of putting it, I wasn't very patient. I think I've had to learn a lot of patience this year as far as rehab goes, watching what I do in the weight room, making sure I don't pick a football out of the trunk and start throwing it around the park,



which I did last year," Crouch said.

"It's a big difference in rest in comparison to last year. I feel like I'm doing a lot better."

So was sophomore Jammal Lord, his back-up. Lord was sidelined late last spring by a knee injury, which not only kept him out of the Red-White game but also delayed his

Stories by Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

Game



Red team quarterback Jammal Lord is chased by White nose tackle Jon Clanton. Lord, limited by a green jersey, turned in a solid performance, rushing for 46 yards and completing 7-of-11 passes for 71 yards.

mages.

Wearing a green pullover is restrictive, according to Crouch. "You go out there with a little less motivation, I think, a little less intensity, just because you know, 'Hey, I'm not going to be able to just crush someone, run them over,'" he said. "The adrenaline isn't going as much.

"But you've still got to remember you're out there leading the team down the field."

Neither team moved down the field consistently in a game-conditions scrimmage that produced relatively little offense. But those in a crowd of 30,414 who could appreciate defense should have come away impressed. The teams' combined total offense was only 426 yards.

The defenses produced 16 sacks, including 12 by the White team. Sophomore rush end Benard Thomas and freshman nose tackle Manaia Brown had seven sacks between them, while sophomore defensive tackle Patrick Kabongo was involved in a game-high 12 tackles.

The defense might have caught the offense by surprise as the game wore on.

"We were supposed to limit the number of blitzes that we did," Coach Frank Solich said. "There was kind of a lapse of memory with the coaches on that end of it.

"It seemed like we did quite a bit of blitzing as we finished the game off."

Crouch wasn't alone of the sideline, watching the action. Several returning or projected starters missed the Red-White game and all or part of spring practice because of injuries, among them fullback Judd Davies, offensive linemen Jon Rutherford, Chris Loos and Jon Dawson, middle linebacker Jamie Burrow, defensive tackle Jason Lohr and defensive backs Keyuo Craver

summer workouts. As a result, among his spring goals was to stay healthy. "Now in the off-season I won't have to rehab," he said after directing the Red team victory. "I can work on other areas of my game, injury free."

Lord's performance was solid not flashy. He rushed for 46 yards on 11

carries and completed 7-of-11 passes for 71 yards, with no interceptions. "He made a lot of good plays," said Crouch.

Lord made plays despite having to wear a green pullover jersey, an indication to defenders that he was not to be tackled. He wore the green pullover in all of the spring scrim-



Red split end Wilson Thomas tries to get between White defenders Jeff Hemje (left) and Willie Amos on a 24-yard reception from Jammal Lord in the third quarter. Thomas was the game's leading receiver with four catches for 47 yards.

and DeJuan Groce.

Davies, Rutherford, Loos and Groce, like Crouch, missed the entire spring, as did weakside linebacker Randy Stella, who was suspended for violating unspecified team rules.

Middle linebacker Tony Tata, nose tackle Ryon Bingham, wide receivers Ben Cornelson and Ben Zajicek, and rovers Terrell Butler and Josh Davis were among others held out of the Red-White game.

With several veterans on the side-

line, young players had an opportunity to show what they could do. "I think our young players came quite a ways this spring," said Solich.

That can only help come fall, when the others return. Tata is the only player among those mentioned with injuries who might not recover completely when the varsity reports Aug. 2. "Once we get everybody back, get a lot of repetition with our players working together, I think you'll see a different team out there,"

Solich said. "I think that's probably true of most football teams in spring ball."

Crouch wasn't concerned about having to miss spring practice. He expected to be 100 percent, or close to it, when the voluntary summer passing league begins in June.

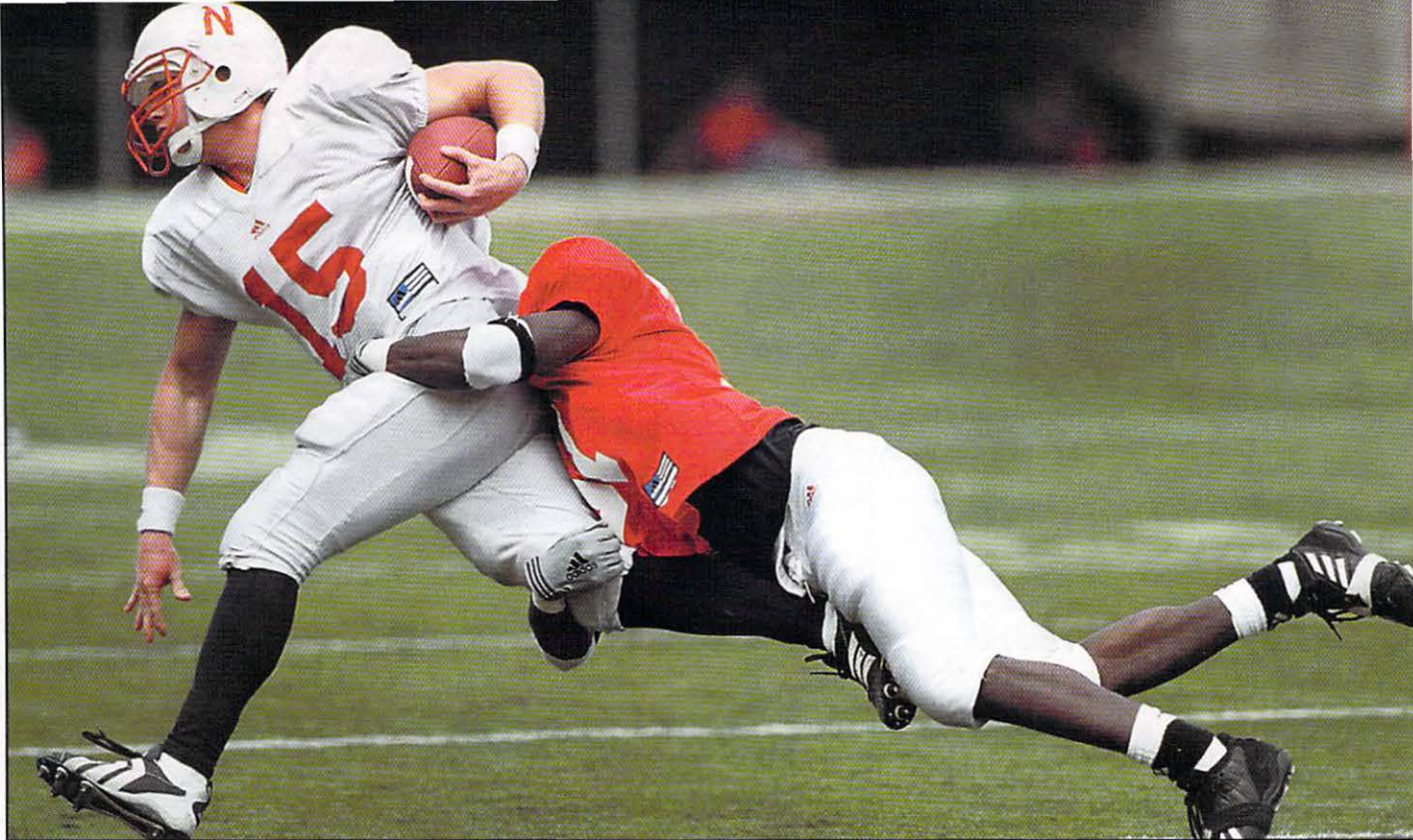
"There's a good six weeks, six or seven weeks (until then)," he said. "I'll throw for about four or five or six weeks, maybe, so I should be about ready for the passing league by then."

"And obviously throughout the rest of the summer, I'll just continue to get the strength back in my shoulder and my flexibility, all those things that make a big difference."

It'll certainly be more enjoyable than charting plays. ■

"Once we get everybody back, get a lot of repetition with our players working together, I think you'll see a different team out there."

— Nebraska Coach Frank Solich



White quarterback Brett Lindstrom is tackled by Red safety Jerrell Pippens after a 10-yard gain in the fourth quarter. For the most part, the going was tougher, as White quarterbacks Lindstrom and Joe Chrisman were sacked 12 times.

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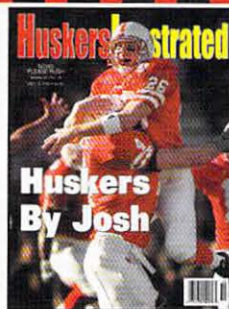
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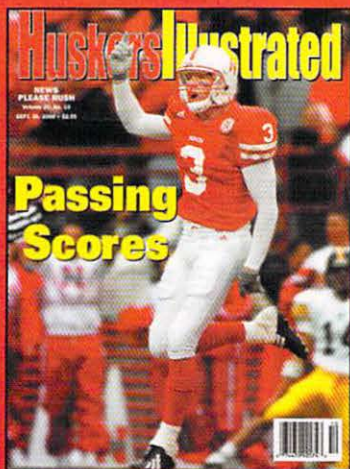
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Spring Game

Move Inside

'Experiment' with Brown appears to be permanent

When Frank Solich asked to talk with him a week and a half before the Red-White game, Manaia Brown figured the conversation would focus on his family and how he was doing. Brown, a freshman who didn't become eligible until second semester, didn't expect a position switch.

Solich caught him by surprise. "I felt confused," Brown said after making seven tackles, including three quarterback sacks, in the Red-White game. "I thought I was doing good at rush end."

As it turns out, he was playing well at rush end. But Solich, defensive line coach Jeff Jamrog and defensive coordinator Craig Bohl also saw a defensive tackle when they looked at the 6-foot-4, 290-pound (he weighed 299 when the move was made) Brown. So Solich asked if he would consider giving defensive tackle a try. Brown could have said no. Solich "gave me a choice," he said.

But he wasn't about to argue with Solich. "Whatever he wants I'll do it," said Brown. "I just try to play d-tackle with a good effort, not have the attitude, 'Oh, I don't want to play d-tackle. I want to go back to rush end.' I wouldn't go against the coaches. They've got a bigger picture."

"I'd never go against a coach's authority. I think the coaches know what they're talking about, what they need to do to help this team. Hopefully, I can help the team."



True freshman defensive tackle Manaia Brown (96) was a force in the middle for the Red team in the Spring Game. He was credited with seven tackles, including three quarterback sacks.

Based on his play during the spring, Brown could help the team this fall, as a situational substitute at

nose tackle, according to Jamrog, in third-down situations, for example.

"He'll get a good push in the

That was apparent in the Red-White game. The Whites' No. 96 spent considerable time in the Reds' backfield. "I thought Manaia really had a strong presence in the middle," Bohl said. "Several times he was able to penetrate the line of scrimmage. We were really pleased with Manaia's progress."

Brown was satisfied with his performance, describing it as "real decent." But "I think I could do much better. To tell you the truth, I'm out of shape. I could be quicker, faster, stronger," he said. "I still need a lot of work before fall. I'd like to lose a little weight so I could run more."

With sophomore Patrick Kabongo trimming down with encouragement from the coaches, Brown was the heaviest defensive lineman during the spring, and probably the strongest. And even though he was-

"I was scared to mess up in front of everybody and (the possibility of) you guys (reporters), saying, 'He ain't all that.' "

n't in as good of shape as he or the coaches wanted, he still showed good quickness.

"When he was out playing rush end at 299 and the ball went away (from him), you wouldn't say, 'Boy, he's not quick enough to play rush end in the program,'" said Jamrog.

As a high school senior in Salt Lake City, Brown weighed 275 and ran the 40-yard dash in 4.65 seconds, according to Jamrog. Brown was credited with 25 sacks that season.

However, given the depth at rush end, "we just thought over the long haul, trying to maybe keep his weight down and all, that he could be a disruptive force in the middle," Jamrog said.

Brown admitted being nervous before the Red-White game, "butterflies and all that stuff. All the other

scrimmages, we had nobody here," he said, trying to explain it. "I was scared to mess up in front of everybody and (the possibility of) you guys (reporters), saying, 'He ain't all that.' "

But Brown appears to be all that, and more.

He really wasn't surprised that he was asked to try defensive tackle. He figured that would happen eventually. He was surprised, however, "at how early they asked me," he said. "I thought they would ask me after spring ball. But from the looks of it right now, they made a good move."

What Solich and Jamrog initially described as an "experiment" apparently will be permanent.

"They haven't asked me to move back yet, so I guess I'm staying," said Brown. ■

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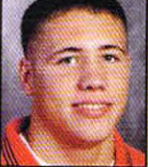
More News From Spring Football

DEFENSE OR OFFENSE

Sophomore Trevor Johnson was moved from tight end to rush end prior to the start of spring practice and remained there, even though receivers coach Ron Brown would like to have had him back.

"Trevor, without question, is an outstanding tight end prospect for us," Coach Frank Solich said in announcing the position switch. But Nebraska is well-stocked at tight end with senior Tracey Wistrom, juniors Aaron Golliday and Jon Bowling and redshirted freshman Chris Septak.

"The fact that he's such an outstanding athlete allows us to take a look at Trevor along those lines. He played defensive end in high school, primarily. So rush end is not something that's totally new."



Trevor Johnson

The plan was to try Johnson on defense for the first two weeks and then evaluate his progress. If the switch wasn't working, "with Trevor, he wouldn't have lost much ground, and certainly he would be able to go back, make that transition back to tight end if he had to," said Solich.

A return to offense wasn't necessary, however. "I'm sure Trevor could do a lot of things on offense, but we're pleased with his progress in the short time we've had him on defense," Solich said.

"I think he's a strong, explosive guy. He's learning, which makes him a little bit more hesitant. But we've seen him come a significant amount as far as his ability to help us on defense."

Giving up Johnson wasn't easy for Brown. "I don't think there's any question that a position coach never really wants to lose a player, especially a guy that's coming along very well for him," said Solich. "Yet, I think everybody looks at the big picture on the coaching staff."

Johnson gave some indication in the Spring Game where he would fit. He was credited with four tackles, including two quarterback sacks for 8 yards in losses for the White team.

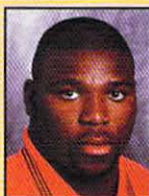
NO PIZZA FOR PATRICK

Sophomore defensive tackle Patrick Kabongo avoided late-night snacks and resisted ordering pizzas, despite roommate Judd Davies' good-natured urging, in order to trim his weight to 285 pounds.

The 6-foot-6 Kabongo weighed as much as 325 pounds last season.

"You really almost don't (recognize him) in terms of seeing him in street clothes, seeing him in a football uniform," said Solich, who was pleased with Kabongo's weight reduction.

"He certainly has improved his endurance. That's something we wanted to do. He has improved his speed and quickness also. It certainly gives him his best chance of getting on the field and being the kind of player he wants to be. He tired quickly and a lot of that was the fact he was overweight."



Patrick Kabongo

GONE, NOT FOR LONG

I-back Thunder Collins was suspended at the start of spring practice for academic reasons. "He'll spend the time actually in a study hall rather than on the football field," said Solich, who indicated that the junior from Los Angeles probably would miss at least the first week.

The suspension got Collins' attention, however, and he missed only two practices.

"Actually, missing any day of practice is real important," Collins said after rushing for 59 yards and a touchdown on 10 carries in a limited scrimmage on the first Saturday of the spring.

"I felt it was really a lot to me to miss practice and everybody else (is) out there. Everybody was asking me, 'Why aren't you at practice?' So it kind of hurt a little bit. I'm just glad to be back. I learned. I learn from my mistakes. As you

can see, I was back earlier than I was supposed to be."

The suspension "kind of put me in my place," said Collins. Collins was the leading rusher in the Spring Game, carrying 13 times for 55 yards.

"I guess I expected to do more than I did," he said afterward. "But the defense was real competitive. I think a couple of runs that I had today really kind of let people know the type of runner I am, let them know that I have the ability to take it all the way even though I didn't score."

DAWSON DOWN

Sophomore offensive guard Jon Dawson suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament when a teammate fell on the backside of his leg during practice early in the spring. Dawson, who was named the team's Lifter of the Year in the spring, underwent surgery and is expected to be back in the fall.



Jon Dawson

Prior to the injury, Dawson had been competing with junior Wes Cody for the starting job on the right side, succeeding Russ Hochstein. "Jon and Wes were both coming along very well at that position," Solich said. "We have other guys there that are vying for spots... so it's not going to be a deal where we're depleted of bodies. But certainly Jon had really been doing very, very well."

Sophomore Junior Tagoa'i also competed for playing time at guard during the spring, after being moved from nose tackle prior to the start of drills. "Junior's a very bright young man," said Solich. "The fact that offensive line is complicated will not present a problem to Junior. He's a very physical player, and he's very quick off the ball, things that are needed in order to be a great offensive lineman."

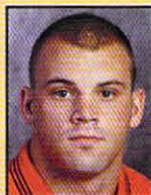
MORE LIFTER OF THE YEAR

Dawson was the only offensive player to be a finalist for the Lifter of the Year award. The other finalists were junior rush end Demoiné Adams, sophomore defensive tackle Ryon Bingham, senior safety Dion Booker, junior rush end Chris Kelsay and senior defensive tackle Casey Nelson.

SURGERY FOR DAVIES

Sophomore Judd Davies, the projected starter at fullback following the departure of Willie Miller, underwent arthroscopic surgery in late March to have part of a disc removed from his back. The hope had been that the back problem could be resolved with rest. But when it became apparent that rest wasn't helping, the decision was made to have the surgery so he could recover in time for the season.

"We expect there will be a full recovery and he'll be able to rehabilitate himself to be ready to play," Solich said. "It's my understanding that he'll be able to come off of that relatively soon, fairly quickly, and that he should have no problem being in great shape when fall practices resume."



Judd Davies

CLANTON, BACK AND FORTH

Junior Jon Clanton began the spring as a nose tackle, got a quick look at rush end and finished at nose tackle in one of the few experiments that didn't hold. Clanton has always performed well in strength and conditioning tests, and the coaches thought the switch might enable him to get on the field.

Clanton's "strength and power and his ability to accelerate, those are all important things at that spot," Solich said of the rush end position. "The fact that he's got great strength and size in terms of taking tight ends on... it all fits. But he's also doing a very good job as an inside player."

In the end (no pun intended), the coaches decided Clanton would be more valuable at nose tackle. ■

BY THE NUMBERS

Spring Game: Red vs. White April 14, 2001

Score By Quarters

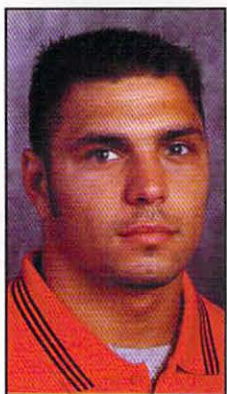
White	0	7	0	0	—	7
Red	7	6	0	3	—	16

Team Statistics

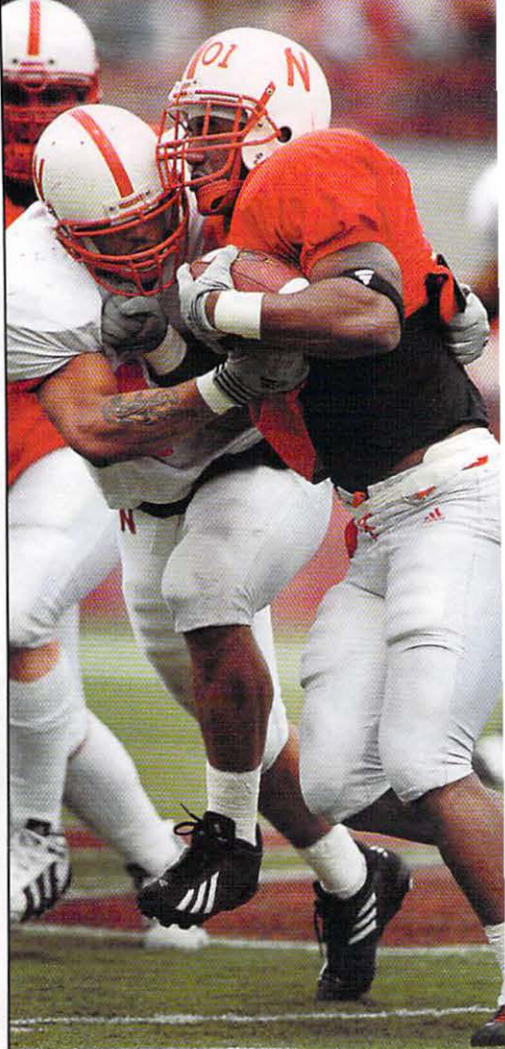
	W	R
First Downs	14	15
Rushing	12	9
Passing	2	4
Penalty	0	2
Rushing Attempts	52	46
Yards Gained Rushing	191	192
Yards Lost Rushing	92	36
Net Yards Rushing	99	156
Net Yards Passing	68	103
Passes Attempted	10	15
Passes Completed	4	9
Had Intercepted	0	0
Total Plays	62	61
Total Net Yards	167	259
Avg. Gain Per Play	2.7	4.2
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	5-44	4-31
Punts-Yards	8-284	4-177
Avg. Per Punt	35.5	44.3
Punt Returns-Yards	3-11	5-27
Interceptions-Yards	0-0	0-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	4-53	0-0
Possession Time	31:53	28:07

Scoring

Red — Dahrran Diedrick 6-yard run (Sandro DeAngelis kick)
White — Robin Miller 8-yard run (Josh Brown kick)
Red — DeAngelis 37-yard field goal
Red — DeAngelis 48-yard field goal
Red — DeAngelis 37-yard field goal
Att.: 30,414
Temperature: 61



Redshirt freshman Sandro DeAngelis connected on all three of his field-goal attempts. He will compete for the place-kicking job with incumbent Josh Brown, who also spent time at wingback during the spring.



Red I-back Dahrran Diedrick tries to break away from White linebacker T.J. Hollowell. Diedrick carried 18 times for 52 yards and a touchdown.

Individual Leaders

White

RUSHING					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Collins, T.	13	55	4.2	14	0
Miller, R.	11	49	4.5	14	1
Reese, T.	2	8	4.0	4	0
Long, D.	1	7	7.0	7	0
Grager, N.	2	7	3.5	4	0
Chrisman, J.	10	-5	-0.5	16	0
Lindstrom, B.	13	-22	-1.7	10	0

PASSING				
Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Chrisman, J.	1-6-0	16.7	22	0
Lindstrom, B.	3-4-0	75.0	46	0

RECEIVING					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
O'Holleran, J.	1	35	35.0	35	0
Collins, T.	1	22	22.0	22	0
Cook, K.	1	6	6.0	6	0
Brown, J.	1	5	5.0	5	0

PUNTING				
Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Brown, J.	5	158	31.6	43

PUNT RETURNS					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Wigert, K.	2	11	5.5	7	0
O'Holleran, J.	1	0	0.0	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Collins, T.	3	45	15.0	19	0
O'Holleran, J.	1	8	8.0	8	0

DEFENSE						
Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Shanley, S.	3	3	6	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	3	3	6	1-2	0	0
Vedral, M.	3	2	5	1-2	0	1-2
Hopkins, L.	3	2	5	0	0	0

Behrends, M.	2	3	5	0	0	0
Johnson, T.	3	1	4	2-8	0	2-8
Booker, D.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Slechta, J.	1	3	4	2-3	0	0
Hernie, J.	1	3	4	0	0	0
Clanton, J.	2	1	3	2-13	0	1-12
Amos, W.	2	1	3	1-1	0	0
McPherson, L.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Tomasevich, C.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Walker, Tr.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Nelson, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Toline, T.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Buller, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Otto, J.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Adams, D.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Swiney, E.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Wichmann, J.P.	1	0	1	0	0	0
McBride, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Boettner, M.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kolowski, D.	0	1	1	0	0	0

Red

RUSHING					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Diedrick, D.	18	52	2.9	15	1
Lord, J.	11	46	4.2	18	0
Albertson, M.	7	26	3.7	7	0
Kriewald, S.	1	14	14.0	14	0
Grixyby, D.	4	14	3.5	7	0
Kastl, P.	1	3	3.0	3	0
Huxoll, R.	3	3	1.0	6	0
Chrisman, J.	1	-2	-2.0	0	0

PASSING				
Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Lord, J.	7-11-0	63.6	71	0
Huxoll, R.	2-3	66.7	32	0
Chrisman, J.	0-1-0	0.0	0	0

RECEIVING					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Thomas, W.	4	47	11.8	24	0
Wistrom, T.	2	25	12.5	13	0

McGowan, L.	1	26	26.0	26	0
Mikluscak, R.	1	6	6.0	6	0
Grixyby, D.	1	-1	-1.0	0	0

PUNTING				
Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	4	177	44.3	53

PUNT RETURNS					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Mikluscak, R.	3	18	6.0	15	0
McGowan, L.	2	9	4.5	9	0

DEFENSE						
Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Kabongo, P.	6	6	12	2-9	0	1-6
Brown, M.	4	3	7	5-13	0	3-9
Pippens, J.	4	3	7	0	0	0
White, J.	6	0	6	0	0	0
Hoke, A.	4	2	6	0	0	0
Thomas, B.	5	0	5	4-25	0	4-25
Huston, K.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Crumpton, P.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Smith, J.	2	1	3	2-24	0	2-24
Cooper, I.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Wichmann, J.P.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Terpening, A.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Warrior, A.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Ickes, M.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Long, J.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Richenberger, J.	0	2	2	0	0	0
White, S.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Woodward, W.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Jackson, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Kriewald, S.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Dunn, A.	0	1	1	0	0	0

DID NOT PLAY

Players missing the Spring Game because of injuries included: Ryan Bingham, NT; Jamie Burrow, MLB; Terrell Butler, R; Ben Cornelison, WB; Eric Crouch, QB; Keyuo Craver, CB; Judd Davies, FB; Josh Davis, R; Jon Dawson, OG; DeJuan Groce, CB; Blanchard Johnson, LB; Jason Lohr, NT; Chris Loos, OT; Jon Rutherford, OL; Tony Tata, MLB; Ben Zajicek, SE.
 Suspended: Randy Stella, WLB.

It's a Long Way



***Gentle giant
Waldrop 'takes
it on himself to
get a little nasty'***

By Mike Babcock

Dan Waldrop's first day at Compton, Calif., High School was also his last. As he and his mom walked to the school's main office, a riot broke out among African-American and Hispanic students. So he and his mom turned around and left. "OK, we'll see you later," Waldrop recalls his mom saying.

Even though Waldrop lived just a couple of blocks from Compton High, he attended Banning High in nearby Wilmington as a junior and senior. "It was less rough there," he said.

Former Cornhusker quarterback Vince Ferragamo played at Banning High for his brother Chris, the head football coach at the time. Even though that was more than 20 years ago, before Waldrop was born, the subject came up when he signed a letter-of-intent with Nebraska.

"You're going to Nebraska? That's where Vince was at," Waldrop said.

There were fights at Banning, "but they didn't do the color thing," he said.

In many Los Angeles area neigh-

Dan Waldrop, a sophomore tackle from Compton, Calif., spent the spring running with the No. 1 offense.

Scott Babin

from Compton

borhoods, wearing the wrong color can get you killed, a harsh reality that Waldrop knows all too well. "Compton is a big, dangerous area," he said.

Even so, he doesn't reflect his environment. He's polite and soft-spoken, in marked contrast to his size. Nebraska's sophomore offensive tackle stands 6-foot-5 and weighs 335 pounds.

"He's not a go-out-and-blabber-mouth type of guy," is how offensive line coach Milt Tenopir describes one of the top candidates to replace Jason Schwab on the right side.

Waldrop spent the spring running with the first unit offense, while Chris Loos, another sophomore, worked on recovering from a knee injury, suffered during Alamo Bowl game practice.

Despite his imposing physical presence and where he grew up, Waldrop was a little too passive to suit Tenopir last season, as a red-shirted freshman. He played in 10 games, enough to earn a letter. But "one thing he needed to improve on was intensity, and he's done that," said Tenopir.

"He just wasn't intense enough. But he's improved a bunch. That's one of the tough things to do, teach the intensity level you have to play at to win in this league. Eventually, they either do it or they don't. They either do it or they fall by the wayside. And he's taken it on himself to get a little nasty."

Some of that is a result of Waldrop's learning Nebraska's complex offense.

"It's hard to be an aggressive football player if you don't know where you're going, if you have doubts about an assignment," Tenopir said. "That all comes with maturing in the system.

"If you're got a pretty good mental grasp of things, then you're going to be a more aggressive football player. But even if you know where you're going, you still have to crank

her up another notch."

Waldrop cranked it up another notch during spring practice, in part because he saw an opportunity that he didn't see last season. He knew he

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was "probably going to be in the thick of it." His attitude was to "fight as hard as I can and get that spot. Whoever wants to fight with me will," he said.

Waldrop's attitude reflects his determination to succeed. He seems to have taken control of his situation, unlike many from his neighborhood, making no excuses and accepting none.

"They choose their own destiny," he said. "They talk to me. They ask, 'You're going to Nebraska?' I was like, 'Yeh.' They said, 'I want to go, too.' I told them, 'You've just got to try hard.'"

"You can make a lot out of things, being from anywhere. It doesn't matter."

He lived with grandparents in Rialto, Calif., and attended Eisenhower High School there as a freshman and sophomore, then returned to Compton, where his parents, a brother and sister live in Village Park, a complex populated primarily by Samoans. He was born in Pago Pago, American Samoa.

Several such gated complexes comprise his neighborhood. Residents and visitors must show proper identification to get in. "That's the only safe way we can do it," said Waldrop. Safe is a relative term. When a security guard for one of the complexes refused admittance, "they just killed him."

"There are a lot of people being killed around there. It's rough. You've just got to get used to it. You've just got to watch yourself. I worry about my family all the time."

His concern extended to coaches, including Nebraska assistant George Darlington, who recruits the area. When Darlington visited him, Waldrop went to an aunt's home in Wilmington.

In Compton, "Coach Darlington, he'd get looks and stuff," Waldrop said. "We didn't want him to get lost in that area because it was that bad. People know when you're different when they see you."

People in his Compton neighborhood who want to stay out of trouble stay off the streets unless they're headed somewhere. "I can't walk outside at night," said Waldrop. "We never stood out on the corner. We stayed inside a lot. I walk to the gas station here. But in Compton I won't."

"People were nicer out here. I really like that."

Though immediately struck by Lincoln's friendliness, Waldrop didn't choose Nebraska for that reason. He picked the Cornhuskers because of their tradition of success.

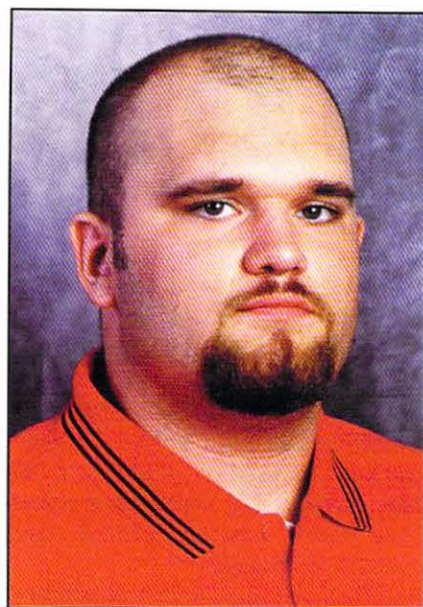
"Coaches from other universities, they were nice to me. But I have this competitive feeling. I want to win, and I know Nebraska can win. That's what they're used to," he said.

That's not to say he doesn't enjoy the quality of life. "People hold the doors open for you. People are kinder to you. They're just like, 'Hello.' The usual thing in Compton or Los Angeles is like, 'What's up?' And the other guy will go, 'What's up?' Everybody (here) will go, 'How's it going?' I was thrown off by it when I first came here. Now I just say, 'How you doing?' I'm getting used to it."

Waldrop lives near 26th and Holdrege, with Cornhusker teammate Cody Volk, an offensive lineman from Battle Creek, Neb., and Brian Wanish, who completed his eligibility in the fall.

"We don't even have a gate around our house," said Waldrop. "I can walk to Dairy Queen."

But, he added with a smile, "We won't let Coach know that." ■



Chris Loos

Tackle Pushes Himself

Chris Loos was told he could expect to be back at full-speed in June, able to participate in the Nebraska football team's summer conditioning program. "But I'm pushing real hard to get it (rehab) done maybe earlier, if I can do it," he said near the end of spring practice.

"It's just a goal, I mean a personal goal. I like doing things, sometimes, that people don't know is possible. That's just kind of me. I'm working hard, keeping with it, not letting this whole injury thing get me down, just kind of keeping positive."

Keeping positive wasn't the easiest thing to do during spring practice, considering Loos, a sophomore-

"Coaches from other universities, they were nice to me. But I have this competitive feeling. I want to win, and I know Nebraska can win. That's what they're used to."

— Sophomore tackle Dan Waldrop

Spring Football

to-be, would have been in the thick of the competition to replace Jason Schwab at offensive right tackle. In fact, he would have gone into the spring atop the depth chart.

Instead, his name went onto the depth chart along with those of players who would miss the spring because of injuries. His injury, suffered in pre-bowl practice, was to the left knee.

Even so, he did what he could to stay involved. During scrimmages, while carrying a clipboard and keeping track of the number of plays run by the offensive linemen, he went through "mentally everything that I'm supposed to do, compare it to what's going on, follow it," said Loos.

The spring was "all a mental practice for me."

On the field it was. But he also had the physical demands of his daily rehabilitation. Staying motivated to do that wasn't difficult. He just thought, "I've got to do it or else I'm not going to get better," he said. "I mean, I push myself sometimes beyond what I'm told to do.

"I've been told to slow down and stuff like that. But I know it's something I have to do. If I start getting lazy, I punish myself, do extra lifts, some extra running. I go until I start getting really, really tired and sore. They tell me, 'That's enough.' And I agree because it's no fun being sore."

In addition to identifying Schwab's successor, offensive line coaches Milt Tenopir and Dan Young would like to identify a tackle to back up both sides. Dave Volk, a senior-to-be, is the returning starter at left tackle. Loos, Dan Waldrop, Kyle Kollmorgen, Scott Koethe and Nate Kolterman are among the candidates. Waldrop will be a sophomore, Kollmorgen a senior, Koethe and Kolterman juniors.

"You've got four or five kids there that have got a chance to be players for you," said Tenopir. "If you can get three tackles who can win for you in the Big 12, then one of them will 'swing.'

"Who that will be, I don't know.

We're trying to find two right now."

Loos tried to do his part, helping out the young offensive linemen in the spring.

Sometimes injured players feel as if they aren't part of the team. But that wasn't the case for him. "The injury hasn't done anything about that," Loos said. "Coach Tenopir, he keeps us involved, keeps us around. He told me before spring started, 'You've got to help out the younger guys.' " ■

2001 Schedule

Aug. 25	Texas Christian* (ABC)	noon
Sept. 1	Troy State	6 p.m.
Sept. 8	Notre Dame (ABC)	7 p.m.
Sept. 15	Rice	TBA
Sept. 29	at Missouri	TBA
Oct. 6	Iowa State	TBA
Oct. 13	at Baylor	1 p.m.
Oct. 20	Texas Tech (Homecoming)	TBA
Oct. 27	Oklahoma	TBA
Nov. 3	at Kansas	TBA
Nov. 10	Kansas State	TBA
Nov. 23	at Colorado (ABC)	TBA
Dec. 1	Big 12 Champ.# (ABC)	7 p.m.

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He's Not in Funk

Hadenfeldt's successor Larson learned to punt on family farm

Kyle Larson doesn't actually reside in Funk, Neb. His family lives on a farm about two miles east of the Phelps County community, and he attended school in nearby Axtell through the eighth grade before transferring to Kearney High, where his dad, Steve, teaches and coaches.

Still, the Nebraska football media guide lists his hometown as Funk, and "I've got a lot of friends there," said Larson. Funk, with a population of 204, is home to "great families, farm families."

The sophomore-to-be and successor to Dan Hadenfeldt as the Cornhuskers' punter learned to punt on his family's farm. He would come home from school and, well, punt. "It was kind of like a hobby to me, I guess, more than anything, just going out and kicking the ball around," Larson said.

Since he was by himself, he had to kick the ball and then shag it.

"It was just something I stuck with over time," he said. "I kept doing it and doing it. All of a sudden, I entered high school and did some kicking, then mostly just punting."

"It just started to show up, progressively getting better."

He became so proficient at punting that he was successful in state Punt, Pass and Kick competition and earned all-state honors as a punter his senior season at Kearney High.

"I had a respectable punting average," he said.

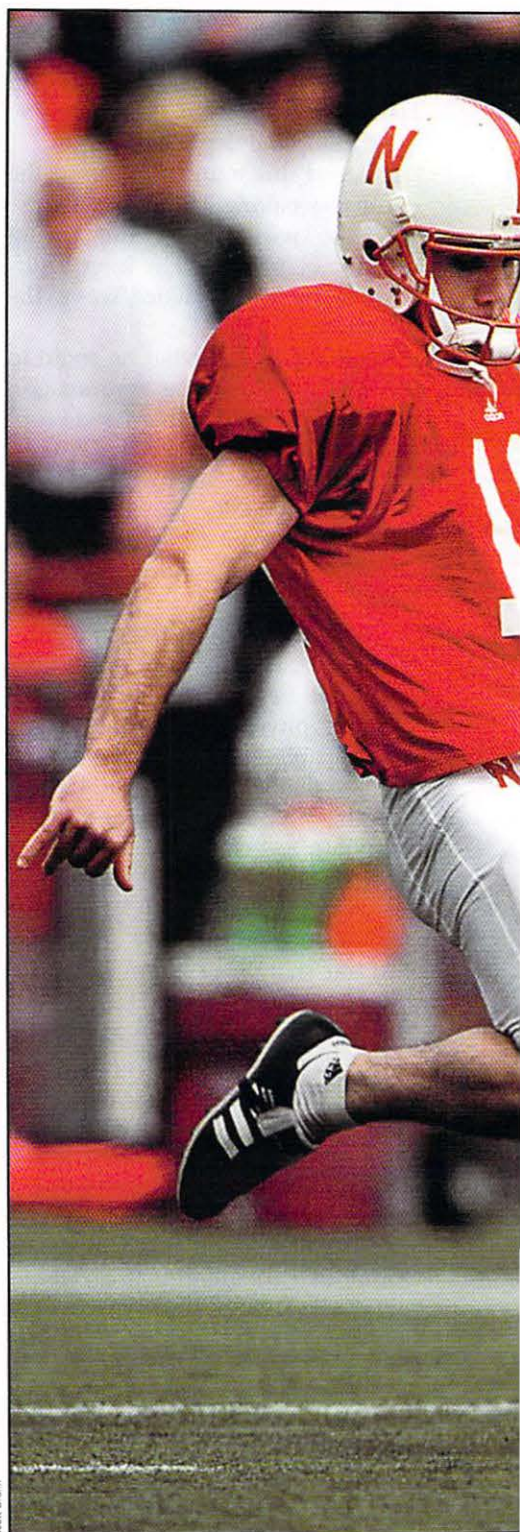
Respectable indeed. He averaged 46.5 yards per punt, best in the state.

Based on that success, and after seriously considering the University of Nebraska-Kearney, he decided to walk on at Nebraska. There were other places he could have walked on. But "when I came down here for visits, it felt like home to me. It's like a big family here," he said.

Last season, that family included Hadenfeldt, to whom the NCAA granted a sixth season of eligibility. Hadenfeldt set a school single-season record by averaging 44.98 yards per punt during what would have been his final season, then followed up by averaging 43.79 yards per punt in 2000.

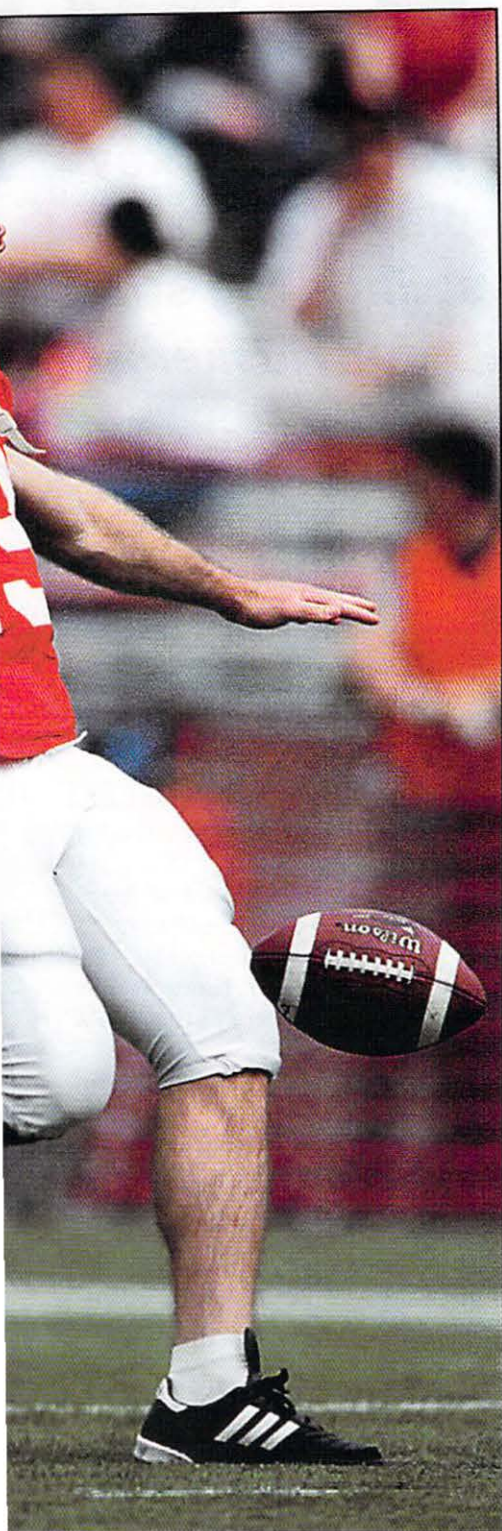
He's now the career record-holder, averaging 44.39 yards on 104 punts.

When Hadenfeldt was granted the extra eligibility, Larson's opportunity was delayed. Even so, "I was very happy to have him back. And that's the honest truth," said Larson.



Scott Brown

"I would have liked to be in the going, too. That would have been tremendous. But I learned a lot just being down on the field. Since I red-shirted my first year, I was up in the



Nebraska sophomore-to-be Kyle Larson led the state in punting as a senior at Kearney High School.

there on the field, getting that experience."

Larson held his own during practice in the fall. "He's got a very strong leg," said kickers coach Dan Young. "He could kick, distance-wise, right along with Hadenfeldt."

Young's only concern about Larson was the time it took for him to punt. He would take a jab step with his left leg, then two more steps, right, left, before kicking the ball. When the goal is to punt the ball in 2.15 seconds or less, eliminating a jab step is crucial. Anything over 2.15 seconds and "if anybody doesn't quite block right, you're going to get close to getting it blocked," Young said.

Hadenfeldt consistently got off his punts in 2.0 to 2.05 seconds.

The deep-snapper is a factor in the time, of course. But No. 1 deep-snapper John Garrison is "pretty consistent, so we haven't had many problems with the snaps from him," said Young.

Larson's goal in the spring was to eliminate the jab step. "You kind of get in a comfort zone of taking that extra step," Young said. "He's just got to break himself and step with his right foot first." Other than that, "he's got a good leg and he's a hard worker. He's got the right attitude about things."

As indicated by his "respectable" description of the 46.5-yards-per-punt average, Larson's modesty matches his punting potential. He acknowledges having "pretty big shoes to fill."

"Dan's a tremendous punter," Larson said. "I truly think he'll do very well in the future in his endeavors. All the guys that have been here before... we've had a great tradition of punters."

Walk-ons have helped fashion that tradition, particularly in recent seasons. In fact, the Cornhusker punter in every season except one since 1988 has arrived as a walk-on.

Byron Bennett, the exception, averaged 41.2 yards-per-punt in 1993, in addition to handling the place-kicking.

Darin Erstad was technically a walk-on in 1994, even though his baseball scholarship had to count against Nebraska's football scholarship limit when he decided to join the team.

He averaged 42.6 yards-per-punt in his one collegiate football season.

In addition, the top four single-season-punting averages in school history belong to players who walked on. Besides Hadenfeldt's two seasons, Bill Lafleur averaged 44.9 yards-per-punt in 1998 to rank second and Jesse Kosch averaged 44.7 yards in 1996 to rank fourth.

Kosch, who led the Cornhuskers for three consecutive seasons, held the career record Hadenfeldt broke. His 39.3-yard average in 1997 was the only one under 40 in the last 10 seasons.

Kosch broke the career record (41.75) held by Mike Stigge, yet another walk-on who led the Cornhuskers in punting for four consecutive seasons from 1989 through 1992.

Larson expected to wait his turn, whether or not Hadenfeldt had been granted that additional season. "I knew I'd have to serve my time," Larson said. "I mean, most walk-ons have to." The patience required to punt a ball and chase it down in order to punt it again has probably served him well.

In any case, he's ready to put Funk on the map this fall.

Larson said he doesn't "take a lot of slack" about being from Funk. Teammate Dan Waldrop, who's from the urban sprawl of the Los Angeles area, was impressed by his hometown. "You're from Funk? That's an awesome name," Waldrop told Larson. "I'll come visit you sometime."

That's Funk as in Philip C. Funk, a Civil War veteran for whom the community was named according to Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, not as in funky. But either might work. ■

stands with the rest of the redshirts. Being down on the field and being that close, getting that exposure with Dan, helped out a great deal, just getting into the feel of being out



Pov

Former hockey player Johnson swings big stick for Huskers

By Mike Babcock

Dan Johnson has resisted the urge to drop his batting glove or first-base mitt and throw some punches.

What might be acceptable in a hockey rink is not acceptable on a baseball field.

Still, Nebraska's senior first baseman-designated hitter has fought the urge.

"Actually, there is a lot of feistiness that comes out in baseball that I probably attribute to hockey," he said. "A couple of times it has brewed over to where I've gotten a little feisty."

"The only thing different is, in hockey you take it to the next step. You kind of shut it off here (in baseball) after yelling and a little bit of shoving. But it's basically the same attitude."

Johnson is as competitive as the next guy. And he has that settle-it-on-the-ice, drop-the-gloves-and-throw mentality of a hockey player, which he was in high school in Coon Rapids, Minn.

Playing hockey, "that was awesome," said Johnson, who earned all-state honors as a left wing. "I had a lot of fun playing hockey, but baseball was always my main sport."

Even so, he enjoyed hockey

Senior Dan Johnson (15) and sophomore Matt Hopper (16) each hit 21 home runs last season.

Power Play

enough that when he began considering where he would go to college, he tried to identify schools where he could play both sports. Such combinations are rare, if non-existent at the NCAA Division I level. "You've got to pay your dues in hockey," he said.

"You've got to go play Juniors, so I would have had to play at a smaller school if I wanted to play hockey right out of high school. There was no school that really fit that mold."

After accepting the fact that his hockey-playing days were over, Johnson set about finding a Division I school at which he could play baseball. He ended up at Butler because "things fell through for me and Butler was in the background saying, 'We've always got something for you.'"

Things also fell through for him at Butler, where he earned all-conference recognition as a designated hitter his freshman season but faltered in the classroom. Just two weeks before his sophomore year was to begin, he learned that his grades hadn't been good enough for him to continue.

That created a problem, which he solved by pulling out the recruiting letters he received from junior colleges when he was a high school senior. The first letter he looked at was from Iowa Western College in Council Bluffs, Iowa. And Iowa Western told him he could enroll immediately, no problem.

"They said, 'We can get you set up in classes and you're in for baseball,'" Johnson said.

Iowa Western brought him close enough to Nebraska that when Coach Dave Van Horn's second team won the first of two consecutive Big 12 Tournaments in 1999, Johnson decided he wanted to be a Cornhusker. So after one productive



**#15
Dan
Johnson**

First Baseman
6-2, 215
Senior
Bats: Left
Coon Rapids,
Minn.

Career Batting Record

Yr.	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	AVG
2000	55	152	48	56	21	53	.368
2001*	34	117	45	42	14	43	.359

*Through April 15

season at Iowa Western, he transferred again.

Now, Johnson has established himself as one of the most prolific home run hitters in Nebraska history, and he marvels at how things have happened since he left Coon Rapids.

"If you had asked me four years ago if I'd be sitting at Nebraska, going to school here and being on a Top 10 team, I would have laughed at you," he said. "It's funny how things work out."

If not for the early academic problems, "I'd probably still be at Butler."

And he might not have become the power hitter he is now.

Johnson batted second in the order at Butler, hitting .276 with three home runs and 15 runs-batted-in in 54 games. "I was the guy that bunted them over, hit-and-run, stole some bases," he said, pausing then adding, "I don't even know if I stole many bases, now that I think about it."

He's hard-pressed to explain how he could hit only three home runs at Butler. "I don't know if I was

shocked because it was a big jump from high school to Division I," he said. "In high school, I didn't have any problems with power. I don't know. My job was more to bunt and run, basically."

His job changed at Iowa Western, where he hit 18 home runs, drove in 65 runs and had an .883 slugging percentage. By his own admission, he became a free swinger.

"I tried to drive almost every ball I could out of the park," he said.

That's in marked contrast to the hitting approach he's had to adopt at Nebraska. "The philosophy here is, you drive the ball where it's pitched," he said. "You don't have to hit a home run every time."

Johnson has become much more patient at the plate. He doesn't try to pull everything. Yet he has continued to hit home runs with surprising regularity. Last season, he hit 21 home runs in 152 official at-bats, or one every 7.2 trips to the plate. He walked 38 times and struck out 31.

Through 38 games this season, he had hit 14 home runs and driven in 43 runs.

With 17 games remaining on the regular-season schedule and the prospect of post-season play following the Big 12 Tournament, Johnson was tied with Ken Harvey for fifth place on Nebraska's career home run list with 35. Though Bobby Benjamin's school-record 48 career home runs would seem to be beyond his reach, Steve Stanicek's second-place total of 42 might not be.

And everyone ahead of him played three seasons at Nebraska.

Matt Hopper, the Big 12 freshman of the year, tied Johnson with 21 home runs last season. But Hopper had hit only four home runs through

the Baylor series this season, the fourth a grand slam in the last of a three-game sweep of the Bears, who came to Lincoln atop the Big 12 standings.

The grand slam increased Hopper's team-leading RBI total to 47.

This season like last, Johnson and Hopper haven't let their home run totals cloud their hitting vision. Even though they have a friendly competition, "the home runs are just a secondary thing," said Johnson. "We cared about them, but we also wanted to win worse than hitting home runs."

"We know our roles. We just keep the team in focus."

That team focus also is what prevents Johnson's occasional feistiness from manifesting itself in punches. "They've made stiffer rules for us," he said. "You have to sit out if you're ejected for fighting. Not only do you have to sit out that game, you have to sit out the next three."

"That could really hurt your team. So it's more of a team thing." ■

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The

***Husker senior
Fuentes teaches
younger players
what it takes to
contribute***

By Todd Henrichs

Just before the pitch, Jamie Fuentes asks for time out and purposely backs away from the batter's box.

She does it again, and again, infuriating the Bradley pitcher to the point she stares in with a menacing glare that would frighten almost anyone.

Undaunted, Fuentes earns a walk and two hitters later scores the go-ahead run on teammate Amanda Buchholz's home run. She successfully disrupted the pitcher's rhythm, one of the little things that only when combined show the impact Fuentes has made on the Nebraska softball program over four seasons.

"She's our veteran," Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "It's not easy to do some of those little things like that, but she's teaching our younger players what it takes to contribute in almost any situation."

Fuentes's learning curve started early. Before she could even be homesick at Nebraska, she was back on native turf in Oklahoma, trying to lead the Huskers to a national championship.

Nebraska hasn't been back to the Women's College World Series since that 1998 dream season, when Fuentes started every game. But looking back, she sees a little of herself in this year's highly regarded freshman class that hopes to make it all the way to Oklahoma City.



First baseman Jamie Fuentes, a first-team All-Big 12 selection as a junior, will finish among NU's career leaders in runs batted in, home runs and doubles.

Veteran

"I was looking at Rhonda every game — and I still do — hoping that I'm in the lineup," Fuente said, reflecting on her freshman year. "I always thought I was lucky to be here, so I just went out and played."

Few players have been as dependable or surprisingly versatile as Fuente. She's started all but four games in her career, sitting out only to protect a fractured right index finger her sophomore year.

When injuries have hit other Huskers, she twice moved to second base to shore up Nebraska's infield and has performed well. Her regular position is first base, where she ranks among the top defensive players in the nation.

Fuente will leave just as big a mark offensively. By midseason, she had moved to seventh on the career RBI chart, driving in her 100th run against Texas Tech, the day after NU had swept defending national champion Oklahoma in a double-header. She'll finish ranked among the top five in career doubles and home runs at NU.

Her batting average has topped .300 for most of the year, the best numbers of her career. She hit just .204 as a freshman surrounded by great hitters but has continually improved, and even her own expectations have grown. Of her 25 career home runs, 15 came last year.

She says anything less than a return trip to the Women's CWS this season would be a disappointment.

"We have the talent, and we're athletic enough that we can do it," Fuente said. Nebraska came within a win of qualifying her sophomore year and missed out by two victories a year ago.

"We had the talent, but I don't truly think we believed in it," she said. "This year, we're training the young girls to realize that we can do it."

Revelle has the Huskers watching

highlight tapes, trying everything she can to replicate that 1998 season when Nebraska swept Big 12 regular-season and tournament titles and finished 48-12 overall.

This year, the Huskers have already broken the school record with 18 consecutive victories.

"We feel like we have the team, we feel like we have the depth, and we feel like we have the strength that we can do that again," Revelle said. "Our freshmen were told in so many words by our returners that they didn't have time to be freshmen this year."

A friendly face with a relaxed personality off the field, Fuente is doing her best to lead the Huskers. She comes from an athletic background.

Her brother, Justin, was the starting quarterback for Oklahoma in 1997.

It would be hard to imagine the pride she would feel leading this Nebraska team back home for the Women's CWS later this month.

She's the only senior with an every-day role. Ahead of her in the batting order are a sophomore and freshman. Two sophomores and two freshmen are lined up behind, looking up to a leader who learned early on the little things it takes to win.

"There are a lot of fresh faces, and they're not sure what to expect," Fuente said. "But a lot of times it's good to go in there and not really know what's going on and just play."

"I had to jump right into it. I think that's the best way." ■



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Chandler Chases

NU sprinter hopes training program changes allow him to save best for last

By Mark Derowitsch

Time and time again, Nebraska senior Chris Chandler proves he is one of the best sprinters in school history. The record book says so anyway. After just a year and a half, Chandler holds every single school record in the short sprint races.

He's even won the national title in the 200. That came during his sophomore season, when as a virtual unknown in the sprint world, he broke the tape first at the USA Indoor Championships in Atlanta.

Despite his impressive resume, one achievement has eluded Chandler so far.

He has yet to win an NCAA title. Or even contend for one.

It's something Chandler is well aware of.

"I'm trying to make this my big meet of the year," said Chandler, referring to both the NCAA Indoor and Outdoor Championships. "It's pretty much all I've focused on."

Chandler is down to one more chance to prove himself on the NCAA stage. At this year's indoor meet, Chandler earned All-America honors in the 60-meter dash, but he failed to qualify for the finals. He ended up 10th.

He also failed to advance to the final of the 200, Chandler's best event.

Next up is the NCAA outdoor meet, and Chandler is pretty much a lock to earn a spot in the 200-meter dash. This spring, his best time is 20.83 seconds, well off his outdoor school record of :20.59 but good enough to rank sixth among college runners.

If Chandler wants to end his brief, two-year career as a Husker as one of the top sprinters in school history, he'll have to do something at the NCAA meet.

Consider who he's chasing: Charlie Greene won six national titles during the late 1960s, three indoor 60-yard titles and three outdoor 100-yard titles.

"Talent-wise, Chris is as good as I've ever coached," Nebraska sprints coach Billy Maxwell said. "I think Charlie has more accolades, but Chris Chandler, in my opinion, is one of the most talented athletes I've ever seen. But there are still some things he has to do, and one of those is get to the next level nationally."

All last fall, Chandler made some drastic changes to his training program, which he feels will enable him to run his best at the end of the season. For starters, Chandler worked out less on the track and more in the weight room, added about 10 pounds of muscle to his tall, lanky frame. Five days a week, he'd work out with Nebraska's Bryan Bailey, the coordinator of reconditioning in the Husker Athletic Performance department.

As a junior, Chandler felt run down toward the end of the year and didn't want to be in the same position again.

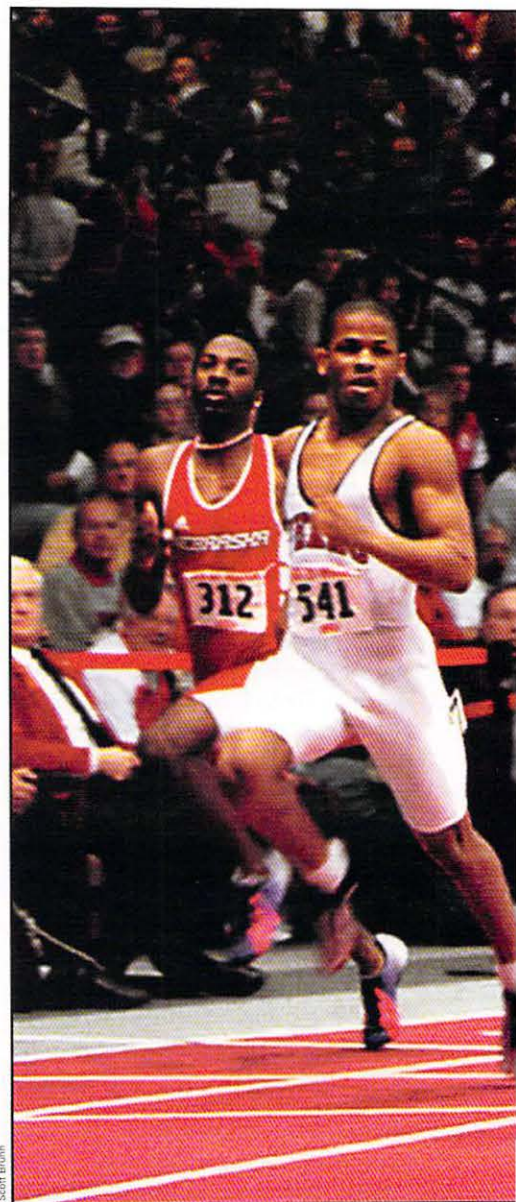
"I believe this will help me when it counts," Chandler said.

Chandler also has a state-of-the-art place to work out. In January, work was completed on Nebraska's indoor track, which transformed the old surface into a 200-meter, hydraulic-banked oval at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I think this is the best track I've ever run on," he said. "I haven't run on many, but I definitely feel it's real fast."

The Huskers all know what Chandler can do.

In his first season after transferring from Wallace State Community College, Chandler broke the Nebraska records in the 60 and 200 indoors and



the 100 and 200 outdoors. One week after winning the USA title in the 200, he earned his first All-America honor indoors with a ninth-place finish in the same event. Chandler also won Big 12 Conference indoor titles in both the 60 and 200. Outdoors, he placed second in both the 100 and 200.

This season, Chandler won the conference indoor title in the 600 and placed second in the 200 to lead the Huskers to their second consecutive team title.

Exclusive NCAA Title



Senior Chris Chandler (right) won the 600 and placed second in the 200 to lead the Huskers to their second consecutive Big 12 Conference Indoor track and field championship.

Now all that's left is for Chandler to run fast when it matters the most.

"I think he feels a lot of pressure to do it, but for whatever reason it hasn't happened yet," Maxwell said. "He could be one of the best sprinters Nebraska has had in a long time, but until he proves it with a high placing at the NCAA, his career won't be complete."

What Chandler does at the NCAA meet in June will likely play a factor in whether or not he's around on the track and field circuit with a chance to qualify for the United States Olympic team in 2004.

Maxwell doesn't think it's such a far-fetched idea. But for that to happen, Chandler has to get noticed.

There's no better place than the

NCAA meet.

"He has to establish himself pretty soon, though," Maxwell said. "He's got to do something to get noticed, so some shoe company will help him out with his training expense and everything. Can he do it? There's no doubt in my mind that he has the talent to do it. Now it's just a matter of making it happen." ■

It's Never Too Early

Recruiting battles are waged earlier each year

By James Hale

The ink is hardly dry to the scholarships the class of 2001 just signed, and already, the Nebraska coaching staff is looking ahead to the class of 2002.

Actually, so are we, as well as the multitude of Cornhusker fans from around the country.

The recruiting battles are waged earlier each year, and there doesn't seem to be anything that can buck this trend. I don't think football will ever get totally out of whack, where school are accepting commitments from pure sophomores, but more and more, you are seeing players committing to a particular school halfway through their junior year.

Nebraska is always ahead of the game in recruiting, so you can bet when it hits the road for spring evaluations in May, in many cases the Huskers already know who they want. However, they also still have more than 1,000 players on their recruiting board. Nebraska is a national recruiting school, and already a number of top players are beginning to list NU as a school where they have

an interest.

Close to home, linebacker Andy Kadavy (6-foot-1, 215 pounds with 4.6 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Seward, Neb., is rehabilitating a knee and should be 100 percent for the fall. Before the injury, Kadavy was having a banner year for Seward, going both ways at fullback and linebacker. He averaged 4.5 yards a pop and scored nine touchdowns on offense, but Andy really shined on defense, with 129 tackles and four interceptions, including three for scores. You get an added bonus with Kadavy in that he is an excellent deep snapper and returned three kickoffs for touchdowns.

Right now, the knee is about 80 percent, but by the time the Big Red Football School rolls around in the summer, Kadavy should be back to 100 percent.

"I have never worked so hard in my life, trying to get my knee back where it was," Kadavy said. "I have been told by my doctors that I am ahead of schedule and that I will be as good as new by the summer. Before the injury, I could squat 425, and I love to lift weights. That is one of the reasons why I am so interested in Nebraska, because of their great weight lifting program. Plus, Nebraska is one of the top football programs in the country."

Kadavy said will sign with Nebraska if they offer, but he also likes Texas A&M, California and Penn State.

Also keep an early eye on linebacker Stephen Hicks (6-2, 215, 4.5) of Omaha Creighton Prep, who received a scholarship offer from Iowa when he attended their junior day. Hicks is talk-

ing to a number of schools, including Colorado, Colorado State, Florida State, Iowa, Iowa State, Tennessee and Texas A&M, however, he has always wanted to play his college football at Nebraska.

Texas is always fertile recruiting ground for Nebraska, and once again the Lone Star State will be one of the top recruiting states in the country. Offensive lineman Bob Morton (6-4, 305, 5.2) of McKinney High School is already being touted as one of the top five offensive linemen in the state, and he comes from a Texas football powerhouse.

Morton may be the best pure center prospect in the country, which raises his stock even more. Morton lived in Massachusetts for most of his life, and his father attended Rutgers. He will give eastern schools Notre Dame Penn State, Rutgers and Boston College a look, along with Nebraska, Texas, Texas A&M, Colorado and Stanford.

The top defensive tackle in Texas has his eye on Nebraska. Marco Martin (6-4, 305, 4.7) of Mesquite is an unbelievable big man with tremendous speed. If he watches his weight, Martin will be one of the top 20 players in the country. Early in the process, Martin is talking about Florida State, Nebraska, Texas, Miami and Texas A&M.

Another great defensive tackle in Texas is Rodrique Wright (6-5, 315, 5.0) of Alief (Hastings), who took part in more than 100 tackles last year. Wright says he is wide open concerning recruiting, but he does have the Huskers among his 20 schools at the moment.

Everybody in the country wants L'Tydrick Riley (6-4, 210, 4.5) of Crockett, Texas. Most like Riley as a linebacker but seem to see him growing into a Jevon Kearse type of defensive end. Some like him at tight end, and some even feel he could be a great safety prospect.

Who is the best running back in Texas? You get a pretty good debate between Jersey Village star Selvin Young (5-9, 175, 4.4) or Albert Hardy (5-11, 220, 4.5) of Galena Park. Young is a whirling dervish small tyke who finds the cracks and is tough as nails. In an injury-plagued year last season, Young still managed to rush for 906 yards and 12 touchdowns, following a spectacular sophomore year when he rushed for 2,204 yards.

Hardy is a big back who loves to run from a one-back or traditional tailback set. He can catch the ball and block as well. Last year, Hardy rushed for 1,855 yards and 18 touchdowns and caught 10 passes for 103 yards.

Both Young and Hardy have Nebraska listed among their top 10 schools.

Linebacker Garnett Smith (6-3, 210, 4.5) of Arlington (Lamar) is a top-20 player in Texas and is already listing Nebraska, LSU, Texas, Texas A&M and Tennessee as his favorites. Smith made 80 solo stops last year, including 16 tackles for losses and 12 sacks.

Jenks, Okla., is once again loaded with two of the top players in the country. Defensive end Brian Pickryl (6-5, 215, 4.5) is regarded as one of the top 100 players in the nation and the best player in Oklahoma. OU and Oklahoma State have already offered, and he has interest in Nebraska, Michigan, Florida State and Texas A&M. Jason Carter (5'11, 170, 4.4) is a cornerback who may be the best pure athlete in Oklahoma. He has been offered by OU, Oklahoma State, Tulsa and Texas A&M and wants to visit Nebraska.

In Alabama, offensive lineman Kyle Tatum (6-6, 260, 4.8) of Prattville is one of the top 10 big men in the country. Tatum can bench 320, squat 450 and he has a 30-inch vertical jump. A tremendous drive blocker, Tatum also made 75 tackles on defense, including 10 sacks.

It will be tough to get Tatum away from Alabama or Auburn, but LSU, Nebraska, Tennessee and Florida State are also very much in the picture. ■

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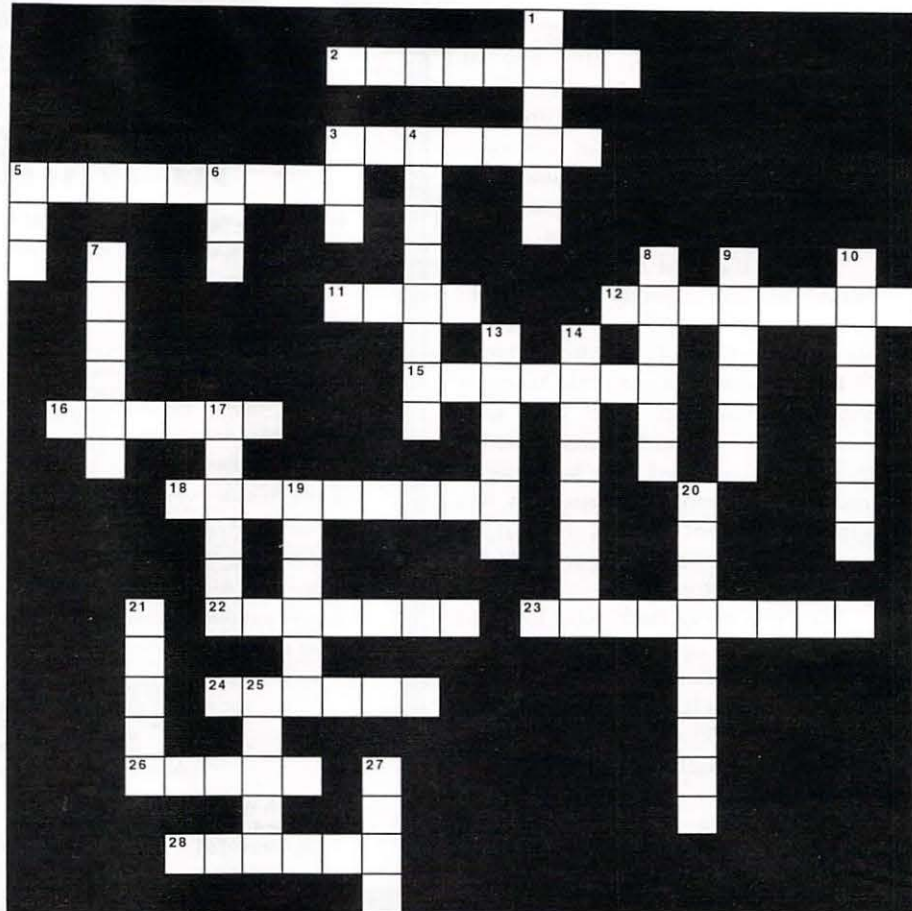
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- 2 Frank Solich's college position
- 3 NU's first Heisman winner
- 5 Sept. 1 opponent
- 11 Spring Game leading passer
- 12 1994 national champion
- 15 Spring Game leading rusher
- 16 NU's No. 77
- 18 Sept. 8 opponent
- 22 1992 Outland winner
- 23 1982 Outland winner
- 24 NU rush end coach
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- 28 NU's No. 7

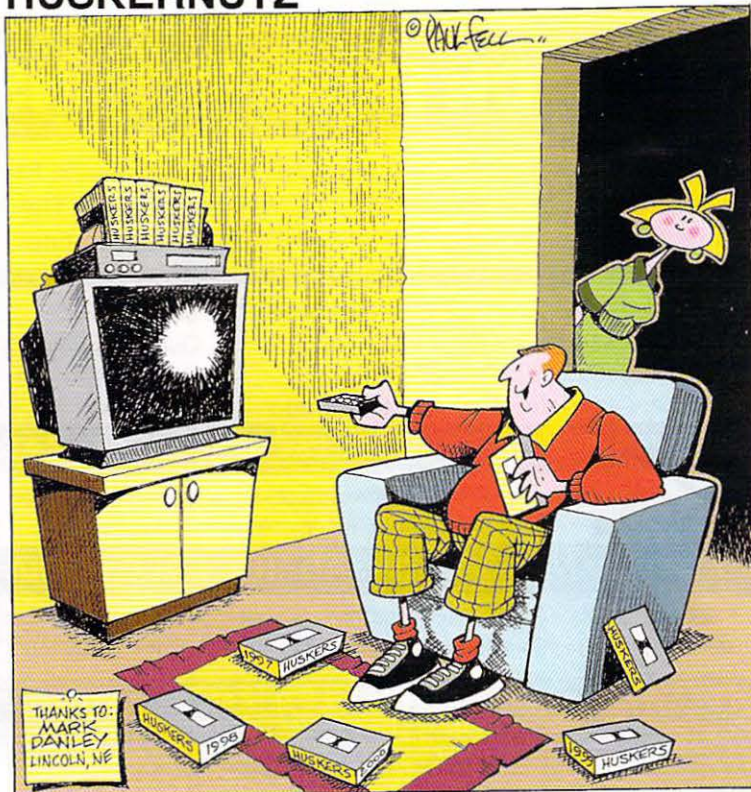
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- 3 Spring Game winner
- 4 NU's No. 30
- 5 Coach before Frank
- 6 2001 opener
- 7 2001 Lifter of the Year
- 8 NU's No. 57
- 9 2001 Big 12 Championship city
- 10 Defending national champion
- 13 1972 Outland winner
- 14 2001 Big 12 opener
- 17 Spring Game leading receiver
- 19 1983 Heisman winner
- 20 Kicked 3 field goals in Spring Game
- 21 Number of home games in 2001
- 25 NU's 2000 bowl
- 27 NU linebacker coach

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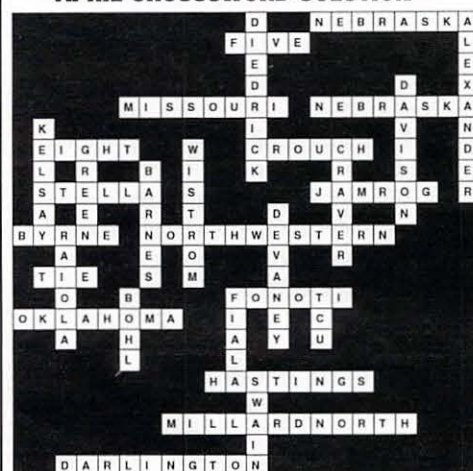
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BENARD THOMAS averted his gaze, choosing to stare at the floor instead of at those asking him questions following the Nebraska football team's spring intrasquad game.

He took occasional bites from a submarine sandwich, which was engulfed by his large hands, and responded to the questions with brief answers in words that were, at times, inaudible.

Small pieces of lettuce dropped to the floor as he picked at the sandwich.

His reticence wasn't personal. Rather, he really did seem uncomfortable talking about himself. "I haven't done anything," he said. "That's why I haven't been doing interviews."

The rush end from East Palo Alto, Calif., was among four true freshmen to play last fall. The others were linebacker T.J. Hollowell and defensive backs Terrell Butler and Willie Amos. Unlike the others, however, Thomas respectfully declined interview requests after shedding a redshirt.

Freshmen, particularly those who play without redshirting, always attract interest. There's something special about untapped potential and yet-to-be-realized expectations. That was even more the case with Thomas because of a self-imposed silence that might have surprised some coaches as well.

"Lately, I've been real quiet," said Thomas. "They think I'm down."

It's understandable when veteran players try to avoid doing interviews. After three or four years in the program, the questions are redundant, the imposition on one's time more difficult to accept. But young players are usually willing, if not eager, to talk to reporters, out of pride if nothing else.

Thomas is interesting not only because he wears a No. 10 jersey, the same as quarterback Jammal Lord and an unusual number for a rush end, and has only one "r" in his first name but also because the last "B. Thomas" to play defense for the Cornhuskers — outside linebacker Broderick Thomas — was a talker of extraordinary energy. A two-time All-American and the self-described "Sandman" and "Master of Disaster" was never at a loss for words, from the day he stepped on campus.

Benard also talked during the pre-season, after reporting with the freshmen, but then went quiet. "I wasn't doing anything, so there was no reason to talk about it," he said, explaining.

If the truth were to be told, there really wasn't anything to talk about after the spring game either, at least not from his point of view. In his estimation, he hadn't played well.

"I got pushed around at times, got very frustrated," he said. "I'm just out there playing football. I don't know the plays. I'm just out there running, plain and simple. I don't know anything."

"Like the coaches say, if you don't know what the plays are, just hustle."

If that was the case, his hustle paid off. He sacked back-up quarterback Brett Lindstrom four times. Lindstrom wore the 6-foot-4, 250-pound Thomas like a pullover jersey.

"I was horrible in the spring. I just got lucky in the game," said Thomas.

Luck can be the residue of design, however, and Thomas wasn't the only young defensive lineman to post impressive statistics in the spring game. Tackle Patrick Kabongo, a sophomore-to-be who has trimmed down at the coaches' request, was involved in 12 tackles. And nose tackle Manaia Brown, a true freshman, was credited with seven tackles, including five for losses and three sacks.

The Red team finished with 12 sacks total, an indication of the defense's dominance as well as what Coach Frank Solich said might have been a "lapse of memory" by the defensive coaches.

"As the game went on, we were supposed to limit the number of blitzes that we did," Solich said. However, "it seemed like we did quite a bit of blitzing as we finished the game off."

Whatever the factors, Thomas and other young defenders made the most of their opportunities. "Any time you have young players, they're wanting to impress people," said Solich. "They're wanting to show what they can do. Certainly we have a number of those guys on the defensive end of it."

"And throughout much of the spring, they've shown very, very well."

Thomas reiterated that he didn't belong in that group, as he worked on the sandwich.

"I don't know the defense as well as everybody else," he said. "Most of the time, I don't even know what I'm doing out there. I'm just trying to play football. I've got to know the plays."

"I had a grasp of the plays in the fall. But I forgot everything."

That was an exaggeration, of course. Thomas knows a lot more than he did in the fall. But pride, his pursuit of excellence, seemed to prohibit him from giving himself any credit. His expectations are high. "More than you'll ever know," he said. "I grade myself way higher than anybody else."

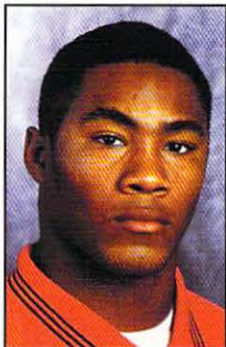
Many of the young players were nervous before the spring game, if for no other reason than the crowd of 30,414 at Memorial Stadium. "I've played in games with more people," said I-back Thunder Collins. "But I don't know, this game had me nervous. My stomach was nervous. I didn't eat."

Thomas, in marked contrast, was "more mad" than nervous.

The reason? "Just the fact that I didn't think I had a good spring," he said.

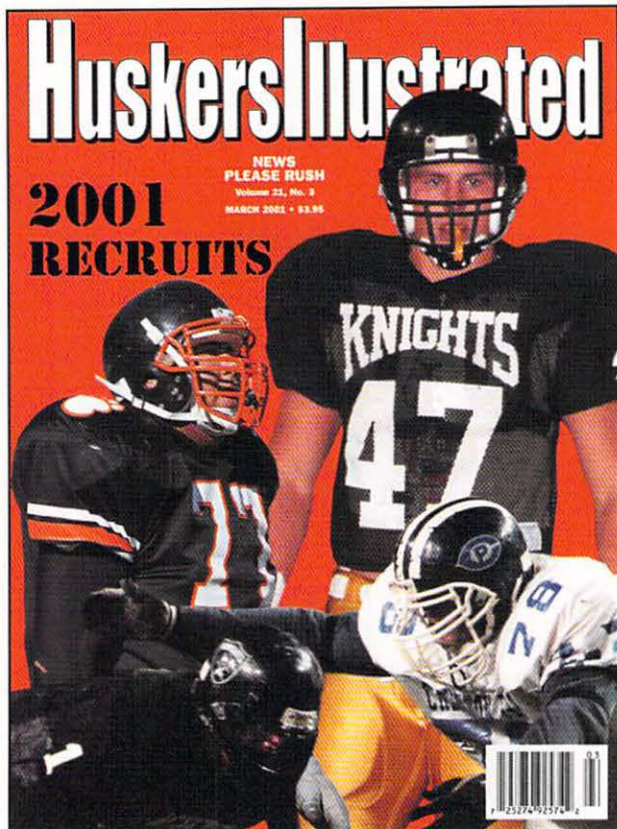
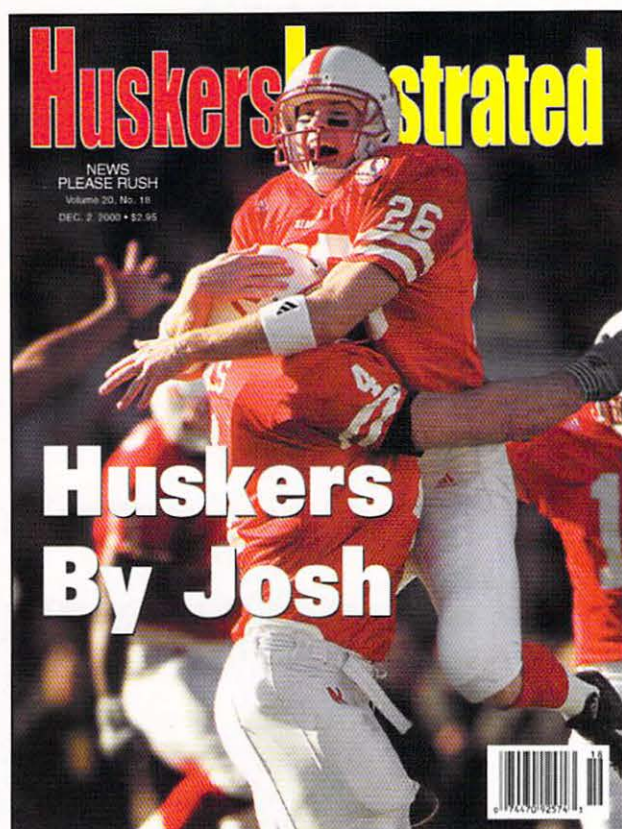
He was asked if anything made him happy.

Well yes, he said with the hint of a smile. He was very happy with the submarine sandwich, which had been reduced by more than half when he finished talking to reporters. ■



Benard Thomas
played in six games
as a true freshman.

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